

Transcript of the file Collier County District 2 Candidate Forum - May 3, 2022
87 minutes in length

Speakers:

Mike Lyster
Jason Brooke
Reg Buxton
Lynn Corr
Chris Hall
Gerald Lefebvre
Nancy Lewis
John Sochor

Moderator: Tom McCann

<http://tv.colliergov.net/CablecastPublicSite/show/1506?channel=1>

[session begins 00:04:23]

Mike Lyster: Good evening, everyone. I'd like to start us off with the Pledge of Allegiance, and we have a young volunteer. [Selah Cooke? 00:04:31] is going to lead us in the Pledge.

Group: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mike Lyster: Good evening. I guess the first order of business is to ask you to silence your cell phones. I'm Mike Lyster. I'm the president of the Collier Citizens Council. On behalf of the Collier Citizens Council, the Greater Naples Leadership, Naples Better Government, and the Legal Women Voters. I'd like to welcome you to District 2 and for County Commission Forum. Thank you for participating in this forum. This forum is being broadcast on Comcast 97 and Summit 98. It will also be available through the county's website. Thanks to the county for the use of their commission chambers and to Troy Miller for assisting with the broadcast. And I'd especially like to thank Nancy Kerns, our Citizens Council Forum chairman, Ruth Prescott, and Bob Raymond who are our committee who put this whole thing together. And Tom McCann, our very experienced moderator, has graciously agreed to be the moderator for the event. Bob Raymond will be our timekeeper. With that, I'll turn it over to Tom.

[00:06:01]

Tom McCann: Thank you, Mike. I wanted to add my thanks to Nancy Kerns who found the venue. She's the one that's been coordinating with all the other sponsors, drafted and published today's program, organized the volunteers, worked with the candidates, and publicized the forum. I haven't seen her clean the room yet, but she's done everything else. Thanks, Nancy. We appreciate it.

Let's go over the ground rules for today. There will be two minutes for all candidates to give an introduction. Following, will be a series of rotated questions with up to one minute to answer. So, if Jason Brooke takes the first question, the second one would begin with Reg and then Lynn and so forth. So, you'll all get a chance to be the first one to answer. Candidates will have two minutes for closing. We welcome questions from the audience. Please fill out the index card

in the audience, and it will be collected. We wish you to please refrain from applause until the end.

As far as the details of timekeeping, Bob Raymond will be the timekeeper, using the chamber's timekeeping system. The yellow card will indicate-- if you want to show that, Bob-- 15 seconds are remaining. The red card indicates that your time is up. So, with that, if there are no questions, let's proceed with the **opening statements**, and we'll begin with Jason Brooke.

Jason Brooke: Hello, everybody. I'm Jason Brooke. I'm a native of Naples. I was born and raised here. My family has been here in Naples since 1952. My grandfather built a lot of the moorings. And my mom and dad followed along with that and worked at Naples Federal for many years before it became what it is now. I'm running because I want to give back to the community I grew up in and make sure that I can help to guide the changes that happen to the city I'm very fond of. Thanks.

[00:07:53]

Tom McCann: Thank you, Jason. Next to speak will be Reg Buxton.

Reg Buxton: I'm Reg Buxton. Thank you for having me here this evening. I'm running for District 2 because I care greatly about our community. There are four areas I'm going to concentrate on: mental health illness (all ages), controlled growth in roads, water, and affordable housing. I'm a civic philanthropist caring deeply about our community, a former publisher of Naples Daily News. I've served my community in over 19 boards. I'm a graduate of Greater Naples Leadership, Naples Leadership, Leadership Collier, and Leadership Institute. In the city of Naples, I served the city for four years as a councilman. I'm now a fire commissioner at North Naples Fire. And I look forward to being in front of you tonight to answer your questions. Thank you.

[00:08:49]

Tom McCann: Thank you, Mr. Buxton. Lynn Corr, please.

Lynn Corr: Hi, I'm Lynn Corr, and I am running for District 2 Collier County Commission. I've been in Naples for 39 years and have seen a lot of growth in this town - some of it good, some of it questionable. But I've been a home owner, business owner, volunteer, tax payer, and a voter. I've raised my children here, my grandchildren here. I've participated in many local events and still volunteer in many others now.

I have several concerns for our county. I've watched the growth and the troubles associated with that. I'm concerned about the lack of affordable housing, the traffic congestion, preservation of our natural resources and habitat, and the quality of water.

I also know that there are projects and plans in the works. I don't to reinvent the wheel, but I want to make sure that these plans and projects continue to better our district and county. We don't need more skyscrapers with hundreds of people on a small lot. We need more affordable homes for working-class people. We need quality roads to accommodate these new homes. And we need good relationships with prospective large businesses and encourage them into making Collier County their base. Progressive businesses will help residents with the better paying jobs and will give them the ability not only to work but to reside in Naples.

There are many plans to improve our roads. We need to see that this happens and this is followed through. There is affordable housing breaking ground. We need to make sure that the property management of these affordable housings will continue with what is set up and the guidelines for that. I am ready to be your commissioner on day one, and I look forward to serving Collier County.

[00:10:34]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Chris Hall, please.

Chris Hall: Good afternoon. Thanks. I'm Chris, and never in a million years did I think I'd be doing something like this. So, let me tell you a little bit about me, and then we'll get into the issues. I'm a 1984 graduate of Texas A&M University. I've been married to Dot Hall for 36 years. I've got two great boys and seven amazing grandchildren. I was a real estate investor since 2000, and that's what we did for a living. We've sold our business; I've got the time and the passion to serve Collier County.

I'm not looking for a job. I'm on a mission. I'm on a mission to protect and secure the rights of every person in Collier County. We experienced the tyranny through Covid and I swore to myself, "That will never happen on my watch." I've been a resident of Naples, Florida since 2015. Like Lynn, I've been here long enough to see the good, the great, and the not-so-good, and I'm in agreement with all of the issues - traffic, growth, affordable housing. I've got some good ideas for the housing, and we'll get into that in a little bit.

In 2013, I survived an airplane crash. I was burned severely, and I'm a miracle. So, I know that the Lord saved me so that I could be your statesman. I'm not a politician. I am, straight up, a businessman. I've got common sense, I've got wisdom, and that has always served me well. I'm not politically correct. I never have been and never will be. I stand firm on what is right because it's right and what is wrong because it's wrong. And I let the Bible determine those issues in my life. I'm a Christian, I'm a conservative, I believe strongly in the Constitution. The Constitution says that the role of government is to secure and protect the rights of the people, and that's first and foremost what I'm interested in.

I'm a fighter. I won't be bullied. I can't be bought. Those are choices. And so, if you want to support me, if you want to back me, if you want to vote for me, you had better vote for me for who I am and what I stand for. You had better never come to me with money, thinking you can buy me. You never come to me with a threat. I'm Chris Hall for liberty and justice with all. We would appreciate your vote on August the 23rd.

[00:12:52]

Tom McCann: Mr. Lefebvre. Was I close?

Gerald Lefebvre: Yes.

Tom McCann: Thank you.

Gerald Lefebvre: You're perfect. My name is Gerald Lefebvre, and I've been a resident of Collier County since 2001. In 2002, I decided to get involved and became a Code Enforcement Board member. I sat right here in this chair up until just a few months ago. I actually sat right in this chair as vice-chair for over 10 years and to the right two other years. So, I know the issues. I had people come in front of me over those years and talk about their cases. I've had residents

come and voice their concern about the cases and so forth. So, I've already listened to the people of the county. I've heard them loud and clear. I've also had leadership positions in other groups and organizations. I was a leader in my church for three years as an elder. I also was a leader in a board of realtors; I'm a realtor here. So, I have several different leadership roles within that.

The major issue is I've spoken to over 600 people in the past two to three weeks. And resoundingly, the biggest issue is regarding development here and how it's being overdeveloped. There's one candidate, Reg Buxton, who has received roughly \$11,000 in his campaign donations from Stock Development. I see that to be an issue. I don't know if the residents here will see that also. But I feel that I know what we have to do regarding developments. I have a plan - not a five-year plan, but a 20-year plan - so we don't make the mistakes that were made previously. So, I look forward to your vote as county commissioner.

[00:14:38]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Thank you for all that are hosting and for all who have come out. Again, my name is Nancy Lewis, and it's my absolute pleasure to be here with you this evening. I'm excited to share a few of the important reasons why I'm running to be your next District 2 commissioner. I am a 30-year, fulltime resident, a lifelong Republican. I work as an administrator for the Pelican Bay Property Owners Association. I am a board member for the Pelican Bay Mangrove Action Group and General Real Estate. I love Naples, I love Collier County, and I am committed to protecting the Collier citizens' rights to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on a local level.

Growth is good. Our economy depends on growth. If we're not growing, we are dying. I support private property rights and the rights of land owners to develop their property. However, it needs to be done in a responsible manner. The county's growth management plan and the development laws were written to ensure that developments do not gridlock our roads and pollute our waters.

So, number one, I'm running to uphold the growth management plan and the development laws that we have. The routine exemptions need to end. As your commissioner, I will not vote for development that the roads and the infrastructure cannot support.

Number two, fiscal accountability, it has to happen in my house, and I'm sure it also does in yours. We simply cannot afford to spend money that we don't have. So, as your commissioner, fiscal accountability will be imperative.

Third, I'm running to be the voice of the people. People are tired of overcrowding, traffic gridlock, lack of space for expansion, environmental concerns, and their voices being ignored. As your commissioner, I will listen and serve you. If you don't want to see Naples become the next Miami, I'm your commissioner. Thank you.

[00:16:43]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: Yes, thank you for having me. Am I loud enough out there?

Unknown Male: Yes.

John Sochor: Thank you. I moved here about 18 years ago. My daughter was born here. I've been in District 2 the whole time. My kids are graduating from District 2 from Barron Collier this year - my son and my daughter. I've seen them go through the school systems. I've seen how the school systems have been dangerous to my kids. And even though, as commissioner, I don't have control over the schoolboard, I do have control over the purse. I do believe we also own the buildings. I would like to see cameras not to be publicly accessed, but every parent should have access to their kid since they pay for that teacher to be there, and they pay for that child to be there as well.

Development has definitely been probably the biggest [issue] I've talked to everybody about. Constitutionally, I don't feel the right to tell somebody what to do with their property. And that being said, I'd like to see more constitutional ownership of land here, where people own their property outright, where they're able to collect their own water like a cistern, be able to farm their land without being zoned agriculturally.

Third, mental illness, which was brought up earlier also. We have a serious crisis on our hands coming up, and it's not just in Collier County. It's worldwide. The value of the dollar is becoming nothing, nothing, and nothing. And it's going to become a very strong burden on our citizens. Having this foresight, I believe I'm the person that can lead through this crisis that is inevitable, coming up in the future.

My name is John Sochor. I look forward to being your next county commissioner.

Tom McCann: Thank you, Mr. Sochor. We'll now begin the first round of questions, and we'll begin with Mr. Buxton. He began with the opening statements.

Reg Buxton: Don't fight over me.

[00:18:46]

Tom McCann: The first question-- and you will all be asked this question-- **who would be eligible for and where do we put affordable housing in the county?**

Reg Buxton: Start off with an easy one. Affordable housing actually, if you look at the plan, could be anywhere. A lot of new buildings, they talk about if you're going to build a building then some odd percent is going to be low-income housing. The greatest need for low-income housing would be in the eastern part of the county in Immokalee. Right now, there is one called Liberty Landing, which is in the process of being built, that has 150 villas. And it's within walking distance of two elementary schools. And the other is the Immokalee Alliance. Warren Buffett just gave them \$1 million. They're in the process of building 128 units.

One thing that works, I was in New Mexico a couple of weeks ago, and they were running ads for teachers. If the teacher came there, they got free housing as long as they had the job. Now, we have fire departments, police departments, education departments, the county all have land. Land is the biggest thing, and that's where we need to start. Thank you.

[00:20:09]

Tom McCann: Thank you, Mr. Buxton. Would you like me to repeat the question, Ms. Corr?

Lynn Corr: Sure. Go ahead.

Tom McCann: Who would be eligible for and where do we put affordable housing in the county?

Lynn Corr: As far as I know right now, their eligibility is a pay cap on who can apply for the affordable housing. I do believe affordable housing should be able to go in any part of the county as long as it is accessible and doesn't create a headache, as in, you don't want to put it in the middle of the hospital area or something of that nature.

Who should be eligible for this? Any middle-income person - our first responders, our teachers, our nurses, our construction workers, our hospitality people. Anybody that fits the category should be eligible for affordable housing. And under my understanding, affordable housing is not low-income housing. That's separate. Affordable housing, we do have subsidies for certain people with a certain income level. Low income is totally different, and we already have some of those in the county as well. Those are different areas.

[00:21:22]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall. Do you want me to repeat the question?

Chris Hall: No, I don't need it. It's a great question. And it's something that has to be addressed in this county. So, who's eligible? I say anybody with a job - anybody with a job that meets, I think, it's 80% of the median income. And those are the workforce. That's the teachers, the first responders, the policemen, the service workers, the people waiting the tables. It's everybody with a job. And so, I don't believe that it's government's job to provide housing ever. I've been a landlord for 20 years. I've seen Section 8. It has never worked, it has always been abused, and I would not be a proponent of that.

Where in the county? Everywhere; everywhere that it can be. The county has land and the county has property that they can give to someone who is willing to develop private land and sell it to these people. In a minute, it's hard to give a plan. But I'm all about private sector workforce housing and not government housing.

[00:22:28]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre [mispronounced].

Gerald Lefebvre: Lefebvre.

Tom McCann: Well, I'm one for two.

Gerald Lefebvre: That's okay. You can go by Gerald. That's fine. So, where should it be? First of all, it should be near central services where there are bus routes and so forth, where transportation is readily available. We don't want to put it where it's going to be difficult for the residents to get to necessary services and jobs.

Who should it be for? There are two different groups. The people that other members mentioned are the police, the fire, school teachers. But then also, there are certain parameters for housing, for affordability based on your income. So, there are two different groups of people.

I feel that there's a right place and a wrong place. **[iAcross from Seed to Table]** t a little over nine acres - basically 225 units,25 units per acre) That's way too many units per acre. We need

to look at alternatives to affordable housing. We need to look at maybe some single-family homes where we can put eight to ten units per acre where families would want to live.

[00:23:43]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: In terms of eligibility, right now, I believe the average median income was either just raised to \$98.6 or \$96.8 [\$98,600 or \$96,800] for a family of four. And typically, what the county has been doing is anywhere from 80% below, certain people will qualify depending on how many people are in their household. Other times, they're allowing for essential service personnel between 80% to 120%. I believe that affordable housing is for essential service personnel, hospitals workers, anyone that falls into that income bracket. I also believe it should be for seniors on fixed incomes.

I think it needs to be located near essential services. However, in terms of land value, it's actually much more cost effective out in the eastern part of the county. The county just did transfer \$20 million into the land trust, and they are currently looking at properties. And I would assume that most of them are probably going to be farther out in the east.

[00:24:51]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: Yes, I find this very difficult. Like I said earlier, I don't think anybody should be forced to do anything with their land. But I'm a project manager for a very high-end remodeling company, and we can't get anybody to work. So, what's happening right now is that nobody can be here already. So, the work can't even be done. I think the very wealthy citizens of this county should step up, because eventually, they're going to have to clean their own house if they have someone who can afford to be here and clean it for them.

There are plenty of fundraisers that go around that raise money for United Way for other things. Why can't some of our citizens step up to the plate and realize this is a major crisis, and in order to maintain their lifestyle, buy some property, set it up, allow your workers to live here, live closely, be a citizen? Thank you.

[00:25:48]

Tom McCann: Thank you. And Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: We definitely need affordable housing in the area. Like most of us said, we need somewhere that is a reasonable commute for any of the residents that live there. There is still a lot of open land. A lot of the land is on this side of I-75 is too valuable to use for affordable housing. I think if anybody should be eligible for it, that needs it, then frontline workers is definitely one of them. A neighbor of mine is a nurse and said that all the traveling nurses with her are getting extremely high rents for the short term they're here, and it makes it very difficult for the hospitals to even hire anybody. Because they can't find a place to live.

I think the most likely place for it to go is in the eastern and southern parts of the county. But I think it's definitely necessary and definitely should not make it difficult for people to get into.

[00:26:46]

Tom McCann: Thank you. The next round of questions begin with Ms. Corr. This question is **should any part of the county budget be shielded from cuts, not available for cuts?**

Lynn Corr: I'm thinking, and off the top of my head no, I don't think there's any area that should be shielded. I am a proponent, though, of holding for tax hikes for three years so we don't have to pay more taxes. But the budget, I would say no. I don't see any area that should not be able to have cuts. A lot of people are going to not like budget cuts, but if it's necessary, I see it happening. But we have a large budget for this county. I don't see where there should be any budget cuts at all.

[00:27:58]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: It's a tough question. It's a big budget. But when it comes to tax cuts, I think it ought to be allowed all the way across the board without harming our public safety, doing anything with our police, our first responders. The first thing we have to do as commissioners is to protect and secure the rights of the people. And we wouldn't want to do anything that's going to make Naples less of a better place to live.

But as far as cuts, I think that we could do an audit of the budget, and we could probably find, in almost every area, where we could save a little bit of money, moving some from here to there and moving some from there to here. But as far as being sacred where we just can't cut our budget, I'm not so sure.

[00:28:49]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: Well, one place I would not want to cut is in police and emergency services. First and foremost, that would have to be the last place that we would cut. We're a growing community. If anything, we need more police, fire, and EMS.

If you go back to 2007/2008, the budget went down. We faced having less income coming in and taxes, because the prices of homes went down. We had street lights turned off. We had medians that we didn't take care of. We cut back on landscaping mediums and so forth. That's why this area is so beautiful.

So, what we have to do now, the tax base has gone up, prices of houses have gone up. We need to make sure that we're fiscally conservative and that we save money so that when we have times that are going to be like 2007, 2010, those year, that we have money in reserves to pay for essential services. But besides police, fire, and emergency services, I think anything is open for cuts.

[00:30:03]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Regarding any shielded, I do believe the sheriff's department and emergency services should be shielded at this point, especially since we're growing. For instance, EMS just added 12 full-time employees because there is a lot more demand. I really don't think we would

need any tax cuts at all if we would just pay for the projects and programs that were truly the responsibility of our government.

[00:30:30]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: No.

[00:30:34]

Tom McCann: Okay. And Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: My answer is not that simple, but it's close. Water and infrastructure, I think those are things that always need to have money put towards them to build in the community and emergency services. I agree with everyone else. Emergency services is something that should never be cut.

[00:30:52]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: Number one, I think people to their government whether at federal, state, or the local level is safety. So, those are off limits. As far as the EMS people, we're still 28 short, and they're still looking for 28 more people. I hope they find them. Thank you.

[00:31:10]

Tom McCann: Thank you. The next round of questions begins with Mr. Hall. The question is **what are the three most important issues for District 2?**

Chris Hall: That's easy. Growth, traffic, and affordable housing. Growth and traffic are simultaneous. They both come together. We have to grow, but when we grow, we have to grow smart, we have to grow responsibly, we have to have the streets. We're talking about just District 2. We have new road programs going in, in the northern part of the district. We're connecting Livingston to US 41 with Veterans Parkway. We're expanding Goodlette Frank in the north part of it. And when we get that done, then we can add the housing with the densities that the roads will take care of and will handle.

When it comes to affordable housing, we have to look for opportunities within the district to create houses to where people can purchase where they have pride of ownership. And those rules would be keeping within if they qualify. You could sell the property with the people that qualify as well. You could have a little bit of equity position in those homes, and that's where it's at.

[00:32:31]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: There are three or four different areas. I think safety, as I mentioned, is very important. We have to make sure that the people, the residents of the county feel safe when they go out to shop. We have to make sure that visitors, when they come down, feel very safe and they want to come back to the community. So, that's one area.

Affordable housing is another. And instead of building four-story apartment buildings, I think we have to look at maybe doing a single-family product where families can come in and live and appeal to different types of people instead of just someone that may clean a house. Like we said, the firefighters can come and can have a family and live in the homes. But growth is the biggest issue that we're going to be dealing with in the future. And we need to grow responsibly. We're looking out east at growing and doubling the community. In 2060, we're going to be between 800,000 and a million people.

[00:33:37]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Specifically, for District 2, I would say growth and lack of expansion space as one. Traffic with the aging infrastructure and an increased demand being put on those systems from the eastern corridor. And then also, the Logan Boulevard canal specifically for District 2.

[00:34:01]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: I mentioned inflation earlier. I think the one-cent sales tax should be removed. That would help the citizens a lot. As the dollar becomes worth less, it helps them save. Again, tax cuts as well can also help people. The ES&S voting machines, I think, are probably the most evil thing that this county owns. I think they need to be removed, and I think we need to go back to paper ballots so we can secure our elections and that they can be manipulated for future generations.

[00:34:42]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: Yes, growth. I think a growing upward, that's a risk for destroying the natural beauty of North Naples. Traffic, a lot of the roads could be expanded, a lot of the roads could be made better. I think that's an important one. And the people I've talked to, it's just the place of government not infringing on their personal rights. They're very passionate about not having that happen again.

[00:35:06]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: The first one, to me, would be mental health. We're way short on care. The last two years have shown, in all the studies I've looked at, that not only adults but adolescents and young children are very, very well impacted by this. And we don't have the space. We're in the midst of it. We're trying to get there, but we need to get more. Traffic. I served on the MPO. I chaired it. I was on the state board of governors. I can tell you we've got a lot of things in the wings, but I also can tell you that the two things are going to happen in the next 18 months is the Vanderbilt Beach extension and an investment for the Veterans Memorial Phase 1. Everything else is 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030. We've got to, somehow, speed that up. I spent four years working with those people. I think I can do something about it.

And then the other thing would be the Logan Canal. Up in Bonita, they're trying to loosen the Caloosahatchee Canal and dump their water that floods up there into that. And that goes right into the Logan Canal. I'm working on that. Thank you.

[00:36:14]

Tom McCann: Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: I agree with the traffic, the housing, the growth. Those are essential. I think we also have a couple of other issues. Over in Vanderbilt, I know of some owners on the canals. They can't even put their boats in the water because it needs to be dredged in the canal area itself. For them, that's a huge issue. I think we need to support new businesses when they come into District 2. We have many areas that we could bring in a new business to allow for new employment for our people so they can stay in their area where they live.

Also, I think we need a little bit more support for our law enforcement. I know where we live, it's a racetrack on Vanderbilt Beach Road, and the law enforcement deputies are just at their wits end trying to get people to slow down. And of course, we have the results of them with many more accidents and stuff. So, those are other areas, I think, of concern.

[00:37:15]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Many of these questions were submitted by our sponsors and their organizations. And some are coming from the audience. So, we're combining them both together. Here's an audience question, and we'll start with Mr. Lefebvre. **Will you take campaign contributions from a special interest group, such as developers?**

Gerald Lefebvre: I have not. And I'm proud of that. I've taken money from family and friends, and I also put in \$3,000 of my own money. Not to say that I won't, but that would not influence my decisions. And I cannot be bought.

[00:38:00]

Tom McCann: Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Absolutely not. I have not accepted, and I will not be beholden to any special interest groups simply because we've got a lot of major decisions that are coming up, and I don't want anyone to be in that position. So, no. The answer is absolutely not.

[00:38:20]

Tom McCann: Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: No, I will not accept any cash money. I'm currently not accepting any cash donations in kind. I know it's a little revolutionary. It's probably not the best political decision to make, but I think it's pure, and it allows the people that supports you to actually be part of that movement to what you're doing. I'm just curious if these people here would accept Republican donations. That is also a special interest.

[00:38:49]

Tom McCann: Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: I would take contributions from special interests. I look at it as like giving money to my kids. Even if I gave them money, it doesn't mean I gave it to them clean their room. So, I would have no problem with that at all.

[00:39:05]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: As Mr. Lefebvre said, I have taken some money from developers. And I may take more money from developers. I will take money if people wish to give it to me and it's legal money. Someone has to be able to work with developers. Somebody has to work with them. If we don't work with them and let them get involved in what happens-- the public has the final word. But if we don't work with them, then what happens in the county is there's no organization, there's no set plans, things just go anywhere and do anything. People in the far east, in the rural lands, every acre they've got, every five acres they've got, they can build a house. Every five acres. You can't stop it, can't do it. If you've got 500 acres, you can build a lot of houses. We have to be able to work with them. Look at me when I worked at the city. I did the same thing, and I did not beholden to any developer that there was.

[00:40:09]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: I don't believe that every pact is the evil one. But I do stand firm on my beliefs. Money doesn't persuade me to change my voting habits. It never has. Have I taken any pact money? No, I have not.

[00:40:34]

Tom McCann: Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: The Bible says that it's the love of money that's the root of all evil. Money itself is amoral. It's neither good nor bad. Anyone that wants to give to my campaign with bad motives, thinking that they can get me to do them favors, is badly mistaken. Would I accept \$1,000 donation from them? Absolutely. I'll buy signs. I'll buy mailers. I'll do everything that I would with a friend's money. As I mentioned it in my opening statements, I can't be bought, and I can't be bullied. Those would be by choice. Nobody can force that on me. But when it comes to taking money from a developer, I'd take money from anybody as long as they know I can't be bought.

[00:41:24]

Tom McCann: Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: I think I answered.

Tom McCann: Sorry. Thank you. The next question-- and we'll start with Ms. Lewis, is that correct?

Unknown Female: Correct.

Tom McCann: What is your plan to deal with the large number of old, leaking septic tanks that create pollution that ultimately ends up in the Gordon River and Naples Bay, a very serious problem in the county?

Nancy Lewis: That, I honestly have to say, I don't know a lot about. I would assume it would be just like the public utilities replacement that's currently going on right now in Naples Park and Palm River. As our infrastructures age, they're going to have to be replaced. So, I would assume it would be like that, but I honestly have to say I don't know specifically about that.

[00:42:17]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: Every septic system leaks. It's part of its system. It has a leach field where the overflow goes through. In flooding waters out in the estates, whatever, you never stand in there, because it's absolutely filthy. It's how a septic system works. Any septic system within the means of infrastructure, this is something that the county and city should desperately look at connecting into the utilities. That's basically about it.

[00:42:49]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: Budgeting infrastructure dollars to improve the sewer system and to transition the neighborhoods off of septic and into county sewer would make it very manageable over time. I like that.

[00:43:03]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: When I was on City Council in Naples, we had an area of 1675 people on the septic tank. Septic tanks leach. They leach onto the rest of the property. They leach back into the ocean - or the bay as you want to call it. I led the charge in that-- you can look it up; it's on film-- to get those fixed. Half of them are done. We're working on the rest of them. I've got two minutes, right?

Tom McCann: One.

Reg Buxton: One minute, okay.

Tom McCann: You could take part of your next answer.

Reg Buxton: Okay. Septic tanks, 38% of our landowners are on septic tanks. If you go down river from there-- which I have; I wrote an article on it, which happened to win a national award-- 38% are on septic tanks. Splenda shows up south of Orlando because of the septic tanks. That's how serious they are. That's why they have to get fixed.

[00:44:04]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: I'm definitely in agreement. The septic tank leakage into the bay is not acceptable. But I think the county and the city should work together to correct this problem and to make sure it doesn't happen again.

[00:44:22]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: As we grow, people do smarter things. As you build new homes, people are hooked up to sewer, they're hooked up to other septic systems that are serviced. If you're on a septic tank that's the old-school tank, it leaches. It doesn't last forever. It eventually fails, and when it fails, the county has ordinances in place to replace that with septic tanks that work. They have to be above ground, they have to be serviced, they have to be pumped, and they have to meet the code. You have to get the permit to get those. And they operate well.

To come to the people of Collier County and say, "You're on a septic tank, you're the devil, and you have to do something different," that's not secure and protecting the rights of those people. They eventually fail. They will eventually be replaced with better systems that work.

[00:45:18]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: Just to clarify. This is regarding Naples Bay specifically?

Tom McCann: No. Let me read you the question. What is your plan to deal with the large number of old, leaking septic tanks that create pollution that ultimately ends up in the Gordon River and Naples Bay? So, the leaking septic tanks is the issue.

Group: Along the river.

Tom McCann: They don't have to be. They could be brooks, creeks, storm water. The pollution will eventually make it to a water source that will lead to Naples Bay or the Gordon River. Evidence is proven. As Mr. Buxton can tell you, they did this in Naples city, traced it, and it's almost impossible for it not to end up in a major water source.

Gerald Lefebvre: I think we might be talking about two canals. And the one would be north of Golden Gate Parkway. That would probably be septic systems that are east in Golden Gate Estates. And number two would be just north of where Blueberry's is. At the DeVoe dealership, there's a section between Goodlette Frank Road and US 41 that, right now, there's a sewer project that the city of Naples is tying into sewers on Wisconsin, Illinois, and several of those streets there. And they're moving north if I'm not mistaken.

So, that cost about \$22,000 a home, and they got a grant for roughly \$10,000 to fix those systems and redo the roads and everything. And they're moving north. So, yes, I think it's imperative that we get the homes that are on septic system off the septic system. But there are also grants and so forth out there to do that. So, I would look into any outside sources to help the homeowners.

[00:47:11]

Tom McCann: Thank you. I think, Ms. Lewis, you had spoken about this. So, Mr. Sochor, it's your turn, I think.

John Sochor: Is this the last question, or are we doing another round?

Tom McCann: No, we're going to keep going. We have until 6:30.

John Sochor: We're only halfway through.

Tom McCann: So, Mr. Sochor, what ideas do you have to address mental health issues in the county?

John Sochor: There are so many layers to the issues of mental health. You've got mental health as it relates to aging. You've got mental health as it relates to poor education. You've got mental health that comes with just the stress of life and the worry of being able to pay your bills. Not all of these things need our help. But the ones that do are the most serious. Because of Covid, we now have a suicide rate statistic of kids between six and eight that never existed beforehand. I do not have a solution, but it's something that is really dear to me, and I would do everything in my heart to make sure every venue was sought out so these people can be addressed. The number of students that are now self-maiming themselves, changing their sex, changing their opinion of who they are of what they were born from is tragic. And nationwide, it's growing in huge numbers.

[00:48:42]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: Mental health is one of the greatest burdens on a community. Mental health systems, in general, need improvement. We all know this isn't just a local issue; it's a global issue. As a commissioner, I would actively prioritize local improvements to the system and work to set forth guiding principles to reduce discrimination and violations of basic human rights. But I don't believe governments should be managing mental health as it is. I think it should be left to the families. My grandmother is heavily involved with Alzheimer patients at the Naples Senior Center, and she doesn't give up on anyone. That said, a small safety net is permissible, but generally, a large government infrastructure has proven time and time again to be burdensome, bureaucratic, and a failure.

[00:49:23]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: I served six years on the foundation board at David Lawrence, so this is very dear to my heart. The number you use is 30 beds for every 100,000. So, we should have 120,000. Right now, we have 60,000. We're going to build another 60,000. I use my publication monthly to try to convince everyone to vote for the 1%. I didn't care what the other 1% went for. It was going to go for good things. But 1% of that - \$24 million - was going to go to David Lawrence. And that's where it's going to go.

Now, when that gets done and built two years from now, we'll probably be at 450,000. So, we're still going to be short 20 or 30 beds. And that's bad. This has affected young children all the way up. It's not just adults. One thing good that has happened is The Willough, who was kind of sitting out there with 187 beds, has decided to turn 24 of those 187 beds into what's called receiving beds. It's a place for people to go so they don't go to Rambosk's jail. They go there and are held there until a place can be found for them. Thank you.

[00:50:28]

Tom McCann: Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: I, too, support the David Lawrence Center and the Willoughs. We just heard of the turning of the beds into the receiving beds a couple of weeks ago. And that's a positive thing for

our community. I also support law enforcement, because the homelessness and the drug use, I think, has a lot to do with mental illness. And if we support our law enforcement to get them, at least, off the street, then we can place them in facilities where they need to be. And it doesn't always have to be a jail.

But the one that's dearest to my heart is the parents that have mental illness and have children that have mental illness and then they can't take care of those children. So, now, we have children in foster care, who have mental illness. And we need to make sure that we support those children to those families that they go to. Being a grandmother of several foster children myself, it's very crucial that we support these families as well.

[00:51:32]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: Mental health is here, and it's very unfortunate. It's here in the elderly. And as of Covid and being isolated, it's here in our children. It's here because of drug abuse. Just like we witnessed Tuesday at the commissioner meeting, from the commissioner board, they granted some relief of some of the rules and the code requirements so that The Willoughbs could bridge the gap between David Lawrence Center and actually getting people healthier and increasing those beds. That's what the commission can do. They can relax the code; they can make it easier and faster for some of these other people to make it feasible to add beds and to get people help for mental health.

I would continue that, working with public and private ventures to join forces to get that done. If we can decrease the mental health, then we can decrease overall health decline when things get worse.

[00:52:42]

Tom McCann: Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: Mental health crosses all barriers. And I would support David Lawrence Center. I also would support building a veteran's hospital on the golf course, out east where the land was just purchased on CR 951 and Golden Gate. So, I would support that. I think we need to have more than one or two centers. We need to go where this population growth is growing. So, out east. Maybe Immokalee and so forth. We have to service the people where they are instead of bringing them all the way back to David Lawrence Center. But I feel very strongly that I would work with the veterans to get a veteran's hospital here so they don't have to go up to Cape Coral. There's a clinic here, but I don't think that's sufficient enough. We have enough population of older veterans that it would be helpful to have a hospital here for them.

[00:53:44]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Just regarding the VA hospital, the funding for that has been approved. So, that's actually in the works. Mental health is a huge issue. One in four people suffer mental health issues and some kind of depression at any time in their life. Bringing awareness to remove the stigma around it so that people will get treatment is so important. This is something that's very near and dear to me, because it did affect my family. Denial and refusing to seek help not only effect the person that is suffering, but it also effects those who love them too.

Collier residents, again, obviously understand the importance of the community's responsibility in providing some of the help. We do have the \$25 million which is going into the David Lawrence Center that the voters approved. While available to the general public, it's also a collaborative effort with the sheriff's office. For years, the jail has been the largest mental health facility. So, we need to support the sheriff's efforts and CCSO in it's vital to use that for the jail so that it's not a holding cell for mental health patients and addiction.

[00:55:08]

Tom McCann: Thank you. I believe you started with this question, Mr. Sochor, so we'll now move over to Mr. Brooke with a new question. **What plans do you have to address traffic concerns in Collier County?**

Jason Brooke: I think I wrote this one down earlier, so I should have one here. For local traffic, I think a traffic study is necessary to ensure that we get it, and we need to expand Vanderbilt Beach Road and expand some of the other North Naples commute lanes for both Immokalee and Vanderbilt Beach Road to go that way. There's not a ton of traffic that I've seen going to East Naples as much as Immokalee Road, which is just a complete parking lot, and then down Airport Road to here. When I lived in East Naples, I didn't have a huge issue most of the time with US 41. But I'm sure it needs an expansion as well.

[00:56:09]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: When I served on the MPO, I worked on a lot of these things that are coming up. I can tell you that you have a 45-year plan, a 25-year plan. Until you get in a five-year plan, nothing is going to happen. Let's take Immokalee Road right now. There's a congestion study out there. They're going to work on Livingston Road between 2028 and 2032, Juliet and Strand from 2026 through 2030, the southbound on and off ramps at I-75 and 26th, Northbrooke Road and Tarpon Road between 2026 and 2030. That's a long time, folks.

The only two things that are happening right now were the two that I mentioned before - the Vanderbilt Road extension, which they're on right now. And the one after that is Veterans Memorial Phase I. After that comes, Vanderbilt Beach Road, US 41 east to Goodlette. That's 2023 and 2024. Everything else starts in 2025 and 2026. There's no quick fix for this. I spent a lot of time doing that-- four years in Orlando, every two months. If anybody can get it done, I know the people. But I'll tell you, it is tough, because the state controls the roads.

[00:57:29]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: Very true. There are plans, as he spoke, of expanding some of our roads. There are some new north and south roads that are planned. Yes, it's going to take a while to get there, but we can't stop. We have to continue on. As a commissioner, you have to keep encouraging for this to move on. If it takes going to the FDOT to get approval for a divergent diamond, or whatever, on Pine Ridge Road, we need to be up there already. We need to get this done. Our roads are only going to get worse. We have more people coming in. Florida is the hot spot. I don't know if you've read that. But Florida is the number one location where everybody is moving to. So, we need to encourage our road expansion, and we need to do it responsibly. I

don't know about you guys, but do you remember Immokalee when they fixed it and the traffic? That's horrible. But we have to deal with it.

[00:58:29]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: To deal with traffic, you have to deal with growth. And you have to do it smart. Besides the projects that Reg mentioned, that's already in place. And it will be a while like he said. But as a businessman, you have to see the needs of buyers, you have to see the needs of sellers, and you have to mix those two to come up with a deal. That's been my experience for the last 28 years is coming up with common-sense, creative solutions. One of the things that's stopping our traffic going out east is conservation groups. They won't allow us to put the roads in their owl areas. While a lot of that is important, some of it could be negotiated. I'd love to be able to sit down at the table and do that with them.

When it comes to housing, if you can put the affordable housing inside where it's closer to jobs, then you lessen the commute. Right now, 40,000 cars a day come into the county and out of the county, jamming our roads. If you can get the housing and the workers close, you can lessen that commute time and lessen the traffic.

[00:59:42]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: Our traffic issues were created back 20 years ago, and it hasn't gotten any better. Development from 20 years ago, there was no forethought 20 years out. That's the problem. The road to repair them are fix them, improve them, widen them. That is going to be exponentially more expensive than it was 20 or 25 years ago. And I'm not talking because of increasing cost. I'm talking because the developments were not approved correctly with wide enough rights-of-way and so forth to put roads in.

A prime example would be Logan Boulevard north of Immokalee Road. It's two lanes. I don't see how you can put four lanes in there. It would be very difficult. So, we have to look at where we're building and how we're building. And growth is everything when it comes to traffic and lessening traffic. We have to look at how we're going to develop out east and make sure that that's done correctly so we minimize the amount of people that come in our particular district, District 2, for jobs and everything.

So, we have to make sure we develop out east correctly. But we're also going to be spending \$68 million between Logan Boulevard and Livingston Road, improving the intersections there in the next 10 years.

[01:01:09]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: The quickest way to stop the bleed is to not approve development that the infrastructure cannot handle. Vanderbilt Beach extension, that is going to be 11/24. It is over \$20 million over budget. How did we get here? It's poor planning and special interests. For instance, traffic impact studies, do you know that staff excludes the high-traffic months when they're doing a high-traffic impact study, when they're going to determine what the impact of

new development will have on the roadways and the infrastructure? For instance, they use September and October rather than the high-traffic months, excuse the numbers. We need to be realistic. We have so many new approved developments that have not come out of the ground yet, and it's going to get a lot worse before it gets better in terms of we're all vying for the same amount of money. The thing is, is Lee County, Sarasota, and Manatee are larger, so they get more federal funding and state funding than we get. And they think our roads are okay.

[01:02:21]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: It's another really hard question. The development always moves faster than the government. The people always move faster than the government. It's just the nature of bureaucracy. One quick way would be to encourage more development of actual office buildings and work out in the estates areas so they don't have to commute in here. Our working class has been forced out to the estates and has to come in.

When I first moved here, Immokalee was just getting expanded. It was two lanes and it was going to four. As soon as they finished that and as soon as they put that last tree in, they removed that tree and expanded it to six lanes. Nobody saw the growth, honestly? Like Nancy pointed out just before me, you already have these approved before the infrastructure is ready for you. It takes more interest in the people and less interest in the development in order to grow sustainably.

[01:03:25]

Tom McCann: Thank you. We have another question. We'll start with Mr. Buxton. This is a question from the audience. **When was the last time you were in Immokalee? It is turning into a third-world country. It's extremely dangerous.**

Reg Buxton: Agreed. I spend a lot of time in Immokalee. There are places there that if you weren't guys like me, you wouldn't go. There are places there where you go back in the woods, the police don't go. When I moved here 33 years ago, I was involved through the church and went out there. There were trailers without floors or had partial floors. People were living there. I can tell you, right now, I can take you to that same trailer. It's still there. People are getting \$500 a week from five people to live there. It's a whole different world out there.

Now, the church is out there trying to do as much as they can. The casino has brought jobs in, but Immokalee is an awful tough nut to crack. I've been out there with Guadalupe; I've been out there with other people. All I can tell is you can do everything you want. The good thing is the kids. Guadalupe, my wife, and I helped two years ago the first kid that went through their program that started in kindergarten. The first kid came out and graduated as a doctor. Do you know where she went? She went to Immokalee to help. That's part of the fix. Thank you.

[01:04:57]

Tom McCann: Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: I was in Immokalee last week. Yes, I know what it's like. I know there are danger areas. There are dangerous areas in Naples. Let's be real. But I think we need the support. The Collier County sheriff is out there. I think we need to support the people and the churches and the organizations that are trying to do good and help the people that are out there. I, too, have

seen the homes that are bare ground. They're dirt homes, and you don't even want to walk in there. And this is where people live. Two and three families live in these small homes. So, I think not just as a commissioner, I think that Collier County as a whole, we need to support Immokalee and the churches and organizations out there trying to help the people. They're trying to legalize the people. They're trying to feed the people. They're people. We need help to take care of them.

[01:05:58]

Tom McCann: Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: That's very unfortunate that people in Immokalee are living like that. And it's sad. The question was when was the last time I've been out there. It was two Christmases ago. I was Grow Church, and we took a whole lot of Christmas presents and distributed them out there. That's not true. I rode my bicycle out there in February and rode back with a big group.

The point is, as a commissioner, that's not in the district. But we're everyone's commissioner. The decisions that we make will affect everyone. And so, what we have to do is number one, we have to support the law enforcement. We have to send the money to the sheriff's office so that they have the resources and the people to get out there and make it not a war zone. And then we have to support the businesses, the churches, and the schools out there so that the people don't have to live in utter poverty. It's a sad situation, but that's what we have.

[01:06:58]

Tom McCann: Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: When was I last out there? I was out there about five months ago. But being on code enforcement for 20 years, there were a large portion of cases that were out in Immokalee. And as the other candidates have said, I've seen quite a few deplorable conditions out there where people are living. One was a mobile home park right next to where they crush cars and stack cars up literally, from here to this table away. Kids were living there. Just absolutely deplorable. So, I think it's imperative that we work with different groups as the other people have said. Work with groups to make sure we get better housing. No one should live the way that some of the people live out there.

[01:07:55]

Tom McCann: Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: The last time I was out there, I believe, was for the Farm City Barbecue. And before that was for some service days with church. Yes, they definitely need help. A lot of churches in town are helping with Guadalupe Center and different programs. We do have the CRA in Immokalee, and I know that they've been getting a lot of grants to help with transportation and covered spots for waiting for transportation. They are actually trying to do a lot to provide, I believe HELP agency just actually purchase land or an apartment building out there. There are a lot of people in private partnerships also trying to help the county in order to bring the level of Immokalee up with the CRA.

[01:08:51]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: I think this falls in the mental health category - again, drugs, crime, everything else. But I'm going to agree with everybody who spoke before me. I do not have a solution.

[01:09:05]

Tom McCann: Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: The last time I was out there was probably, I think, six months ago or so. I went out there and got some tacos. It is a struggling area, and it has been that way since I was a kid. When I went out there as a kid, it was still that way. My parents were afraid to drive out there in the 1970s. I think we need to support the sheriff's department. I think we need to support the Department of Health services that does a lot of work to support that area.

[01:09:37]

Tom McCann: Thank you. We'll begin the next round of questions with Ms. Corr. **What are the most pressing infrastructure needs in Collier County?**

Lynn Corr: Well, there are several. The one I'll talk about is the-- I think we already brought it up-- about the water and the sewer issue and the contamination that it does to the Gordon River. The county just approved for a new station just last week for water. I think that's our number one issue is the water. We have a lot of people in small areas that use a lot of water, and we have to guard that. We have to watch our intake of water. We don't have a desalinization plan happening now, which would be a great study for us to do. But we have to respect the water, because it's going to run out. Talk to Lee County; they're having water issues. Talk to Marco Island; they've had serious water issues.

[01:10:59]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: Well, it's certainly not parks and recreation or a golf course. So, I think one of the main infrastructure needs in the county is roads. And there was a move with the commissioner board on Tuesday to accept a change order for public utilities because of rapid growth that exceeded their expectation. The county asked for a change order for \$10 million basically to put public utilities in two other villages, and the whole project was done on time, on budget. They asked for that, and the commissioner board allowed that.

I thought it was a good decision, because that's putting good money down now to save bad money later. While the contractors have got the pipes in the ground, they can add the public utilities instead of saying, "No, we're not going to do that." And then when the growth happens and it just forces us to, we have to go back and dig stuff up and then add it later at a much greater cost.

So, was it planned? No. But was it a good decision? Yes.

[01:12:09]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: There are a couple of areas that we have to look at. I was at a Big Cypress Basin meeting last week, and there was a presentation on water capacity, and we have enough water capacity through 2040. In the presentation, what they stated was that over the years, the

amount of water that's been used has gone down, but the population has increased. So, we're using actually less water than we were 10 years ago because of conservation.

So, what we have to focus on is look at using more reclaimed water so we can use less water so we don't have to go to more expensive wells and desalination and so forth.

Roads are a big issue. And what we have to look at that's in our district specifically is the pumping of water from Bonita into the Logan Canal, into preserves to the canal north of Immokalee Road, which is eventually going to go right past north of Immokalee Road and cause a lot of problems with flooding and so forth.

[01:13:22]

Tom McCann: Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: I think that the infrastructure is definitely something crucial that needs to be addressed. We only have two east-west roads in the northern part of the county - Immokalee Road and Vanderbilt Beach Road - and it's just going to be impossible to move people through. People want services, they want to go the beach, they want to go downtown. And so, this is something that we're going to have to actually address and look at innovative ways to either add four lanes one way, three lanes another way, or something in order to be creative. But we need to look at things.

The other thing is, the water situation with the Logan Boulevard Canal is definitely an issue simply because of the fact that they're going to be pumping thousands of [gallons] of unclean water, untreated water into our preserves and protected areas, and it is going to come out just around the Caloosahatchee and going out into Bay House. And we could end up with polluted water as a result of it, so we need to protect our water.

[01:14:33]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: I come from a metropolitan city, so I don't put traffic as a big thing here. If you notice, you've got your three months of heavy, heavy traffic. Other than that, you've got your rush hours, which is normal for any city. I'm not saying that that's not a necessity, because part of our infrastructure is our visitors that come here. That's a big income for us. We need that to survive. And we need to make it easier for them to get around and spend their money. Solutions to it, I've got several ideas. I don't have the time to explain them.

Water is always a problem in the entire country - how we treat it, the chemicals we put in it, your bathing and drinking water, it's not even healthy. Your septic tanks leak into your aquifers. It's not just Logan coming in. It's all of us everywhere. I think it's going to take a really hard re-education of society to all work together for this to be resolved. Thank you.

[01:15:41]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: I think the one main thing is the water and sewer. I'm very much in support of long-term solutions presented by the water and sewer department for waste water capture and largely finding ways to reduce overall demand, identifying ways to assess the demand of the

system. I think that we need to find ways for better storm runoff. That's always been a major problem here. And I think that we need to expand roads and repair the roads we have like a lot of the candidates said. I've lived in big cities too, and those big cities had lots of traffic, and this isn't that bad compared to that.

[01:16:19]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: One thing that's worked in this city and can work elsewhere is what we call gray water, reclaimed water. That way you re-use your water. You're not going to drink it, but you can use it to water your plants and everything, uses like that. Another thing that I, along with Ms. McLeod, who is in the back there, spearheaded in the city from the first of June to the first of October, there was a fertilizer ban. Any lawn worker caught in the city that had fertilizer on their truck automatically got fined, because you don't need fertilizer then. But everybody wants their lawn green, and they do all those kinds of things. Those are two things we can do to help infrastructure.

One other thing we have to-- and nobody has brought this up-- 400,000 people right now (2020/last census); 2030, 500,000; 2050, between 900,000 and 1.2 million. That's a lot of people, and they're coming. We can't stop them. We've got to plan really good.

[01:17:23]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Okay, this is our last question, and we're going to start with Mr. Hall. You will have two minutes. Also, we'll give you a chance to talk about yourself if you wish, if you have something else other than you've talked about earlier. The question is **what distinguishes you from the other candidates?** And we're going to start with Mr. Hall.

Chris Hall: To be a commissioner is a big deal. It comes with big responsibility; it comes with a big commitment. I'll be a fulltime commissioner, and there's a lot to it. As you've heard tonight, we're dealing with water, we're dealing with growth, we're dealing with traffic, we're dealing with economics, mental health, finance, business law. We're dealing with utilities, parks and recreation, conservation, and wastewater.

My main thing is to protect and secure the rights of you and to keep Naples an amazing place to live. And so, here's what I know. I know the old established ways of government are not going to solve today's problems. We have to be creative, we have to be wise, and we have to use common sense. I'll add the common-sense portion to this. It's going to take someone who cares. It's going to take someone who listens. It's going to take someone with some backbone. I've got the backbone. It's going to take someone with some character. I've said it before; I can't be bullied, and I can't be bought. That's the character that I bring to this table.

Common sense, that's what's missing in our government, it's what's missing in our society, it's what's missing in our county government. Wisdom is the ability to use the knowledge that you gain. I will apply wisdom in everything that we learn. Experience, I've got 28 years of business experience. I don't have one year of experience repeated 28 times. So, I'm not looking for a job on the tax payer's back. I'm looking to go to work for you. I'm looking to go to work with you, and I'm willing to go to work because of you. So, when I say, "For liberty and justice with Hall, liberty is your rights that are God given in this county," I mean it. ChrisHallNaples.com. Vote for me August 23rd for county commissioner.

[01:20:00]

Tom McCann: Thank you. We're two minutes, right, Bob? Thank you. Mr. Lefebvre.

Gerald Lefebvre: This is our closing statement?

Tom McCann: Yes indeed. Your last question and closing statement. We also asked you about what makes qualified for this versus the others.

Gerald Lefebvre: Okay. Well, I think I mentioned a little bit about my background right from the beginning. So, again, being a member of the board of code enforcement for 20 years. I've actually sat in the audience here and looked at people just like yourselves with issues and questions and problems and tried to help them out and guide them on where to go to get solutions. So, I've solved problems already sitting right here.

But more so, I have a seven-year-old and a nine-year-old. I want them to grow up and be able to come back here and live here and enjoy what's here. So, I don't have a five-year plan like what was asked about a month ago in a forum. I have a 20-year plan. I want to plan out this community so it's a beautiful community like I came to 20 years ago. I don't want to see it where people say, "I don't want to come back." I want to be able to be proud of this community. I want to be able to listen to the people of the community and lead by leadership. And what I mean by that is have people like yourself, an open door, be able to come to me regarding growth. We need to change how we do it now. Right now, it has failed. It's way too late before the residents of this community find out what is being built. We have to do it much sooner. We have to have people like yourselves engaged in the community.

I've been walking around and talking to people, knocking on doors, and people ask me, "What does a commissioner do?" I don't want that to be the case. I want them to know what the commissioner does so they can come to me and know what to expect. And I can give them the answers and where to go to get their problems solved, and that's what I will do. Thank you very much. Vote for me.

[01:22:06]

Tom McCann: Thank you very much. Ms. Lewis.

Nancy Lewis: Thank you. I am not a politician. I believe, though, that I have the greatest depth of knowledge of what's actually happening with some of the issues in the county. I will work closely and collaboratively to affect positive changes with the other commissioners. I have absolutely no special interest except to represent the citizens of Collier County. This is our county; it's our future. The campaign that I'm running is a campaign of the people and for the people. I am committed to listening and to responding to the wants and needs of the citizens, not special interests. And I am willing to work more than full time in order to affect the changes here in Collier County.

Lastly, my policy is to uphold our land use policies. It's one that protects private property rights, the environment, and the land, and at the same time, protects Collier County residents. It preserves our right to pursue the life, of liberty, and the pursuit of happiness - those local quality-of-life issues that are so important to all of us. So, I hope I can count on your vote on August 23rd. NancyLewisListens.com. Thank you.

[01:23:36]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Sochor.

John Sochor: Thank you. I'd like to thank everybody who worked to put all this together today. It's obviously a lot of work that you guys have done, especially Nancy. You're a superstar. You're very pleasing to work with, getting here. The solutions in our future is not this position of commissioner. The solutions in our future are fellowship of our society. It's how we treat each other, it's how we respect each other, and how we have commerce with each other.

If we over develop, then you can under supply. If you under develop the utilities to handle the over development, then you can't fulfill the necessary needs equally to the people. It's very complex problems that need to be solved, but it's not just solved from this commissioner's position. It's solved by the people as well. And I believe, through PSAs, through education, through workshops, getting other people involved into things is an important thing that we should look into.

I think a lot of people are scared right now. I think a lot of people are scared of where we're going to end up being in the next-- look at what the last two years have been. It's not going on a trajectory that's going to be healthy for anybody. So, I'd like to conclude with saying that voting for Sochor is a vote for the community. I'm working a fulltime job right now, and I'm working a fulltime campaign. I don't plan on stopping those hours. I just plan on stopping one job and doing the job of commissioner. So, vote Sochor this November 8th after you decide which one will run against me in the primaries. Thank you very much. And God bless Collier County.

[01:25:29]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Mr. Brooke.

Jason Brooke: I believe I'm the only Naples native. My family has been in Naples for 70 years now. I think I'm the only veteran too. I'm on the VA healthcare system. I'm the only veteran here running for commissioner. I have Naples's best interest in mind, and I plan to help guide that going forward. I've lived in big cities while I was in the military and seen how they've done it there and seen what not to do and what to do, and I'd like to take that skill and wisdom I've learned there and try to make the home I grew up in a better place for my family and for the people of Collier County. I think that I'm in a unique position to do that.

I do have a fulltime job. I've worked at \$21 billion companies, and I run my local HOA, and I currently sell airplanes to foreign militaries. So, I have a lot of that going on, and I manage a lot of things at one time. I don't think I'd have any difficulty doing this for you and for the people of Collier County. So, I'd appreciate your vote on August 23rd. VoteJasonBrooke.com. That's Brooke with an "e" on the end. Thank you.

[01:26:36]

Tom McCann: Mr. Buxton.

Reg Buxton: I've sat on this **dais** before when I chaired the MPO. During that time, I sat here with four of the current commissioners. During that time, we collaborated together and accomplished many positive decisions. So, I can work with who is there right now. Everyone up here has a plan. It's a plan. My plan has history behind it, has experience behind it, and has execution behind it. There will be no learning curve when I sit up here. I've done it, and I can do it again.

I've cared about and served this city for over 30 years. I appreciate your vote for Reg Buxton. Thank you.

[01:27:25]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Ms. Corr.

Lynn Corr: On just a little side note to Jason. I'm as old as your parents, and I've been here that long. And I'm also a daughter of a vet of the Air Force, and my brothers are marines, navy men, and army men. So, I'm in the veteran family as well. But what distinguishes me from everyone else is that I'm a hard worker. I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty. I've worked in blue collar work all my life. My husband had a construction business, and I ran his office and did the bids and went out and walked the jobs. So, I know how to get out and work with people.

I've also been in leadership before, and it was successful. I've worked with bikers, and I've had the respect of bikers. I've gone to the capital. I've worked with legislation on on the capital floor. I'm also compassionate. When we talk about the mental health issues and things that go on there, it's near and dear. I'm very compassionate for people. I'm compassionate for those in Immokalee. They have come here and struggled hard, and they will struggle the rest of their lives. So, that touches me greatly.

But basically, I'm a fulltime student. I'm always learning. Every day, I'm trying to pick up something new. I'm learning from these people up here. I've learned from you people out there by the questions that you ask. So, I am always learning. I am not going to be the perfect commissioner, but I will be a good commissioner, and I can be your commissioner. I'm on Facebook under LynnforCollier. I plan on doing a great job. Thanks.

[01:29:14]

Tom McCann: Thank you. Before we wrap up, let me remind us of a few important dates. The primary election is August 23rd. Early voting is August 13th to August 20th. The general election is November 8th. Early voting is October 27th to November 5th. I want to thank the candidates for participating. Our best to all of you, and thanks for being candid with us.

[applause]

[session ends 01:29:46]

Professional transcript by Patricia Wilson via [Upwork](#).