

Greater Avenues Community Council General Meeting
LDS Hospital
Wednesday, July 10, 2019, 7:00 PM

7:00 p.m. – Jill Van Langeveld, Chair, called meeting to order and provided brief introductions, overview, and thanks.

Salt Lake City Mayoral Candidate Debate

Moderator: Gene Fitzgerald

*denotes the first respondent

1. Opening statement (60 seconds):

- **Stan Penfold***: I was previously the City Council representative for this area and ran the Utah AIDS Foundation.
- **Erin Mendenhall**: I have been on the SLC Council for 6 years. I'm a mother of three. I founded Breathe Utah.
- **Rainer Huck**: I'm an immigrant, a retired electrical engineer, and a public lands access advocate.
- **David Ibarra**: I have a passion for compassion, inclusion, and fairness. I'm a business owner of several businesses and I have had several government appointments over the years.
- **David Garbett**: I went to law school and worked at the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. I have a picture of my daughter in urgent care due to a breathing issue, and that reminds me why I'm running. I want to make a difference.
- **Richard Goldberger**: I am a journalist, and my slogan is "Government By Objectives" GBO. I serve the people. I believe in common sense.
- **Luz Escamilla**: I've been in the state legislature for 11 years and served on various committees and advocated for bills that are relevant for SLC.
- **Jim Dabakis**: I have an entrepreneurial spirit!

2. A question stolen from Democrats for President candidates: What is your one big idea or one main thing that you wish to accomplish for Salt Lake City?

- **Stan Penfold**: I advocated for the "No Fare for Clean Air" – free UTA service on red air days. On the first day it was piloted, ridership went up 26%; this year when it was tested, it was up 25%. I believe every single resident should have a free UTA pass.
- **Erin Mendenhall***: My one idea is reimagining the economy of SLC. We have the University of Utah and all of its entrepreneurial output, we're the cultural capital of the state, we have better transit than many other areas, and yet we are missing the tech industry in the city and it is in other places. We can partner with universities and businesses to bring the med-tech sector into the city, in particular. People should want to live, work, and play here.
- **Rainer Huck**: My idea is regarding the homeless situation – it's a disgrace how we treat them. Operation Rio Grande was shameful. I suggest building a campus in the Northwest Quadrant with room for 5,000 people and all the services they need. The current cost of the new shelters is \$60 million and will not hold that many people. This idea would be a much smaller cost per person.
- **David Ibarra**: My idea is for affordable housing. There are people who work in the city but don't live in it. This shift would change air quality, relationships, small businesses.

- **David Garbett:** I believe that we can do something about air quality. No one has ever said, “Here are the steps we are going to take.” I would create a new area of the city attorney office to go after polluters. We should move the refinery and the power plant and convert electricity to 100% clean energy.
 - **Richard Goldberger:** The UXX, Utah Export Expo – a permanent expo that is always open, exclusively Utah products. The Port Authority is wrong.
 - **Luz Escamilla:** Growth is happening and we are feeling it. I want to focus on sustainability, to address multiple issues: air quality, homelessness, equity. We need a mayor who is able to deliver on their ideas. I’ve already delivered related to early child care intervention. The city administration needs to be more efficient.
 - **Jim Dabakis:** On my last day in the Senate, the Republican Caucus invited me in and talked about how, while they often didn’t agree, they were able to communicate. It is critical that the mayor be able to communicate with different groups.
3. Clearly a question that is on everyone’s mind and that you have been asked many times over the course of your campaign for mayor. That is, the inland port. Are you for it, against it or in between? Please substantiate your answer with why you are for or against it.
- **Stan Penfold:** Vietnam protests were not non-violent. With this issue currently, people are not feeling heard; protesters act out; we need to respond by saying “Tell us what we need to hear.” We were given an awful deal, and now we are working on something less awful.
 - **Erin Mendenhall:** I would far rather see green space and not smokestacks. We need a mayor who is going to tell us what is going on and who is going to show up “no matter what the table setting is.” The issues with it currently are that it takes away tax revenue and land use decisions. Our current mayor walked away; I will never walk away from the conversation.
 - **Rainer Huck*:** I’m for the inland port and against the lawsuit by the city against the state. You never win when one government agency sues another government agency. I see everything through the perspective of the working poor. The inland port will help the economy of the state. Why aren’t you more worried about the destruction of the SLC airport parking garage and terminals?
 - **David Ibarra:** It shouldn’t have gotten here, but we are where we are. We need to go forward with the lawsuit to determine jurisdiction. I am against the inland port unless it can be at net zero impact on environment. Regarding the recent protest: I grew up during the Vietnam issue. Peaceful protest is our right, but when it becomes uncivil, that isn’t our right. Hate attracts more violence.
 - **David Garbett:** Violence yesterday is not the way to do it. We do need to protest the inland port, but this is not how. With the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, we fought the government, so I am familiar with doing so. Even while litigating, the city needs to be working with the state legislature for other ideas. It’s critical that the public stay engaged.
 - **Richard Goldberger:** I’m against the litigation; I’d like to see arbitration. I’m for the inland port if it’s in Wendover, which is a distressed areas and needs the jobs. I want to see UXX in the Northwest Quadrant.
 - **Luz Escamilla:** I’m on the record opposing it, and particularly the process – lack of transparency. We need a mayor to get things negotiated with the state legislature. The lawsuit is critical for healing; people in Northwest Quadrant feel dumped on. There needs to be dialogue.
 - **Jim Dabakis:** Don’t lecture us about civility and respect until you’ve treated us with civility and respect.

4. This question has to do with your leadership style. Recently there have been disagreements between the mayor and the council, the mayor and the legislature which has tended to coopt city interests. How would you deal other legislative bodies that hold positions with which you disagree?
- **Stan Penfold:** We have a strong mayor and a strong city council, and there is supposed to be conflict. We are all better for that conflict, as long as we all participate. The starting point for any conversation or deal for the mayor is the city council. The hard work starts internally. I understand how it works.
 - **Erin Mendenhall:** I live here [in Salt Lake City, rather than the surrounding areas] on purpose, and many of you live here on purpose. We are set up for conflict. We don't benefit as a city when we elect mayors who are going to punch the legislatures. We need to build bridges. We have a long ways to go on a lot of topics and we need to keep that bridge functional.
 - **Rainer Huck:** You've had the experience of voting for officials and then having them be impossible to contact. My office will be open 8 hours a day for constituents to come in with the concerns that they've had. City programs have been reduced. Dealing with the police – Utah police killed 19 people last year, more than the criminals did. Change the training and the behavior of the police and respect the rights of the citizens again.
 - **David Ibarra*:** I can never remember a time where we came to an agreement by insulting the person. In leadership, we have to set our purpose and have everyone involved to do so. You don't do it alone. Get talent in department heads. You never fix everything broke by having everyone leave. We spend most of our time planning and never executing or follow up.
 - **David Garbett:** Two fundamentals: How to interact with the state legislature: Engagement, engagement, engagement. Example with Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance: find the common ground. The mayor should empower city staff to make a difference – share the vision with them to act (e.g., Warm Springs Park).
 - **Richard Goldberger:** I am a commonsense person. I will listen to the people. Mobile office in all of the neighborhoods of SLC. Objectives must be specific and doable. Be on one things to make things work and work well.
 - **Luz Escamilla:** Check on people's experience, results, and reputation. I've worked with legislative and executive branch. There is low moral for city employees. I'm a progressive woman of color, an immigrant, and I have been able to move bills forward with real impact.
 - **Jim Dabakis:** My first position in public service, I was the chairman of the Democratic Party of Utah, and I was able to turn the organization around. I have met with lots of department heads in SLC, met with council people. The staff are afraid of making mistakes – my attitude is “if you aren't making mistakes, you aren't reaching far enough, and I will cover you.”
5. Another question of importance is how to deal with the homeless. In your answer I would like you to describe the concept of Single Room Occupancy (SROs) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and if you favor them or not, and how they might help alleviate the problem.
- **Stan Penfold:** SROs are an important tool, as are ADUs. The city council has been listening to concerns and revising the ordinances. I've been impressed with how compassionate this community is. We solve incredible problems. Example from the Utah AIDS Foundation. It's our community, people who live with us, we can solve these problems.
 - **Erin Mendenhall:** We need a whole spectrum of housing. SROs are great solutions for people who need transitional housing. ADUs as an option so people who own have options to generate income. We conflate affordable housing with homelessness. It's been one of the biggest issues I've worked to address on the city council.

- **Rainer Huck:** City Council passed increase in sales tax to hire new police, when crime is down. Shift this money over to build homeless camp. We could house them with respect and quality. SROs and ADUs are great ideas, but they cost money. Most homeless people have no money. A camp could be built in less than a year and take care of our people, especially in the winter months.
 - **David Ibarra:** SROs – used to be called “The Boarding House.” Everyone knew each other, it was clean, and it was nice. Tiny homes are going in the back of lots. People on fixed income can rent rooms in their home to create an income.
 - **David Garbett*:** 3 important steps for the mayor: we’re going through a transition for how we shelter the homeless, and we may have a few years where we are under capacity, so we will need temporary emergency shelter. We need an impact measurement team (who are we serving and how do we reach our goal to shorten length of time in shelters). Homeless people have said they want SROs, I support ADUs but don’t think they will be effective in addressing the issue of homelessness.
 - **Richard Goldberger:** We need to shift our language to “American refugees” rather than homeless, which makes them sound like they are garbage. I think we should set up a massive refugee camp for them. We will not allow people to camp on city property, or defecate on city property. A Human Resources Campus would resolve issues in the short-term. We have an emergency here and we must deal with it.
 - **Luz Escamilla:** Yes, I support SROs and ADUs, I think we need to review ordinances to make sure they are effective. It’s important to recognize the definition of chronic homelessness, people who may never go into a shelter, but they have rights still. We should bring wrap-around services to them (e.g., Austen). State needs to support Medicaid expansion, and other initiatives; it isn’t the city alone.
 - **Jim Dabakis:** One of the best things I’ve seen is the giant table. Look what we have – we have a community! Government people, philanthropic, non-profits, all caring about this issue. The mayor’s job is to keep people energized to solve the issue.
6. There is always the question of air quality since we are one of the least clean air cities in America. How would you improve the quality of our air? What concrete specific plans do you have to address this issue? (You may talk more about the inland port on this subject if you have not already done so).
- **Stan Penfold:** “No fare for clean air.” I made it happen. \$52 million would cover fare for all of UTA riders. We will spend \$1 billion next year on freeway construction. I’m tired of waiting for the state. Even the red parts of this valley are concerned about air quality.
 - **Erin Mendenhall:** This issue is why I’m in public service. We haven’t done enough about it yet. The state is not going to pay for our bus fare. SLC should not need to shoulder the burden of paying for public transportation for everyone throughout the state. We need to accelerate our renewable energy. We need to transition the bus fleet to electrical and enforce stricter standards on buildings.
 - **Rainer Huck:** People used to heat their homes with coal. Then there was new technology – natural gas, and the air was cleaner immediately. There is a new technology now – autonomous cars with zero pollution. It will be convenient and low cost. Everyone will love it. Don’t spend money on outdated technology.
 - **David Ibarra:** I’m an expert in automotive sector – I speak to groups on what it will look like in 5 years. Austen has an autonomous electric car that is a shared resource. That is our future. Why

don't we invest in moving people to affordable house where they live, work, and play? Make our decisions around people.

- **David Garbett:** I bring passion and I also want to bring reason to the issue. State a goal and develop a roadmap to get there, quantify the cost of each step, and hire people to model the impact. The reason we have made improvements is because of the federal government. I don't tolerate businesses that dump their garbage on residents. I'm not afraid to stand up to the refineries.
- **Richard Goldberger*:** I would require all city vehicles and machinery tuned up to spec. I would have the "pollution police" – hotline number where things can be reported, with fines for repeat offenders.
- **Luz Escamilla:** I'm co-chair of Clean Air Caucus. We have to work with the state! Data is very important. I've passed legislation to gather air quality data in different settings. We're not going to solve this in one night, but we need to take individual steps in partnership with the state. Transportation and building are important considerations.
- **Jim Dabakis:** It takes some big vision. We've heard about this problem. It takes big energy and big solutions. My ideas: free UTA from entire system; only 11% of their revenue comes from the fare box. Legislature gives money for fossil fuel.

As time was running out, Moderator read the remaining questions and candidates had the opportunity to include any thoughts on these questions in their closing statements.

7. Transportation, roads, infrastructure are all problems for Salt Lake City. What are your specific plans to address these needs concerning public transportation and reconstruction of failing streets?
8. Many cities are abandoning plastic recycling due to Chinese recyclers refusing exports. How can Salt Lake City lead on recycling? How can the city best deal with non-recyclable waste? Do you believe in regulating the use of single-use plastics?
9. Was the elimination of "Big Trash" haul away days in exchange for "Call and Haul" a positive or a negative change. How would you deal with the problem?
10. Is historic preservation important for retaining the character of Salt Lake City? Should historic preservation override development?
11. Last August Salt Lake Department of Public Utilities presented a plan to keep a very productive well in service by building a water treatment plant on almost half of one of the two island parks just south of Memory Grove calling it the 4th Avenue Pump House. The plan has been revised several times and put on hold by the City Council last month for more study. How would you as mayor help Public Utilities with its goals of keeping a good water source available and providing health and safety to its employees as well as to the surrounding neighbors who would live within 80 feet of the project?

12. Closing statements

- **Stan Penfold:** We are a blue dot, and I am so proud to be in that blue dot. We are a smart people; we know how to lead out. My commitment is to lead out, works with the council, and that will show the state how they can benefit from us being smart and blue. It has been a pleasure to be in the Avenues again tonight.
- **Erin Mendenhall:** I think experience really matters, and we need a mayor who can agree to disagree with the council. I know how to run this city and how to have this conversation.
- **Rainer Huck:** One of my motivations to run for mayor was because the city gutted the annual clean-up program. Regarding the well project, we need to develop our water resources.

- **David Ibarra:** I am passionate about doing the job of mayor. My rough upbringing and earning my right to the table led to being at the table as an executive. I bring a different skillset. I understand local politics.
- **David Garbett:** We face an air quality problem; I've worked in that space and I have a plan. We have a homeless problem; I'm working in that space and I have a plan. We have a housing problem, we have a problem with the inland port. I'm a new face to politics but I've been working on these issues throughout my career.
- **Richard Goldberger:** 4th Ave well should be eye candy not an eye sore. I will bring the office of the mayor directly to you. My hand is out to you for your vote and your money.
- **Luz Escamilla*:** This LDS Hospital is special to me, as it is where two children were born and my dad passed away because of a lung problem due to air quality. I'm realistic and I have been around long enough to know how to make things happen.
- **Jim Dabakis:** We talk about big issues; we need to talk about big ideas. The state is ready to spend the money to address car pollution. We are not an island.