

**Napa County Latinx Democratic Club
Candidate Questionnaire
DEADLINE FOR RETURN: September 4, 2020**

Candidates Name: **MARK JOSEPH** **Area/District:** **AMERICAN CANYON MAYOR**

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Party Affiliation: **Democrat** **Campaign ID #:** **1325789**

Campaign Manager: **N/A** **Contact #:** **N/A**

Candidate Specific Questions

1. What qualifications do you have for the office you're running for and why do you deserve the Napa County Latinx Democratic Club's endorsement? **I have over 30 years of experience in local government, with an emphasis in finance and management. I served as American Canyon's Finance Director and City Manager; and for the last 10 years as a Councilmember. I have also been very involved in my community, serving in leadership roles in Kiwanis, the AC Arts Foundation, Relay For Life, our local Chamber of Commerce and others. I served on the Board of Directors for Arts Council Napa Valley, Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition, the Democratic Central Committee, the local American Canyon Democrat Club (and active in reactivating that club), and the Napa Valley Economic Development Corporation (many years ago!)**

I am asking for the Napa County Latinx Democratic Club's endorsement because I believe in the same Democratic values as the club. Moreover, I see the NCLDC as a critical stakeholder in Countywide policy issues. You can also be a key resource in identifying local candidates for our Commissions and Committees, or prospective employees for our local businesses.

2. Please include an example of your leadership on Latinx issues? Also, what will you do as an elected official to ensure that POC and our Latinx communities are represented? **As President of the American Canyon Arts Foundation, I wrote a grant to fund a multi-cultural program, highlighting the many ethnic groups in American Canyon. This included the Filipino, African American, Middle Eastern and Latinx communities. The program was well received. Educating people on the nature and value of different cultures is a critical first step in breaking down barriers.**

As Mayor, I would work to make our City's workforce look like our community. At present, we do not collect data on the racial/gender/ethnic breakdown of our employees. As such, we do not know if our workforce reflects our diversity. This is another first step and demonstrates a philosophy of leading by example. I would also

encourage more Latinx members in our community to apply for Commission and Committee openings.

3. What are your top three priorities, and how will you ensure that you accomplish those?
My first priority is restoring the fiscal health to American Canyon—the pandemic has already forced us to cut millions out of our budget. With my background in local finance and management, I believe I can balance the budget in the short run and provide financial stability in the long run. Second, I want to address traffic. Improvements along the Highway 29 corridor will take years to accomplish, since it is a State Highway; we need to focus on getting the Newell Extension built all the way to South Kelly. This can be done by requiring the adjacent property owners/developers to build the road; and working with the County to provide the “gap” financing. For example, we could trade affordable housing units for County contributions to the road. Third, Climate Change. We need to develop a local action plan to address Climate Change, with a focus on generating more renewable energy, combined with incentivizing more electric vehicles. We need to seriously consider adopting some or all of the “budget conscious” agenda of Napa Climate NOW.

Issues

4. Latinx community members are often deemed essential workers, what will you do to mitigate the effects essential workers suffer during this pandemic, including your employees?
City employees have paid leave provisions, so this was not a difficult issue to address. We encouraged teleworking, including the creation of a Virtual City Hall (almost everything could be done online, instead of going to City Hall). Beyond our own employees, I worked with a group headed by Pablo Zatarain of Napa Fair Housing, to craft an urgency ordinance adopted by the County to implement a moratorium on evictions, including any late fees. As a member of the local Kiwanis, I shopped, bagged and delivered nonperishable food to local community members.
5. How will you tackle the next upcoming natural and public health disaster and how will this plan actively engage the Latinx Community? What is your plan to ensure that disaster planning is culturally competent and provides language access?
American Canyon has done a good job of responding to emergencies and I expect that to continue. It did take us some time to embrace providing all of our messaging in English and Spanish, but this is now built into the process. After this pandemic/fire season ends, I believe we should establish an ad hoc committee that represents as many stakeholders as possible, including the diverse ethnic communities in American Canyon. The purpose of the committee would be to review our Emergency Response protocols to ensure we are not ignoring any relevant community/cultural elements.
6. What is your stance on Black Lives Matter? How do you link this movement to the needs of the Latinx community?
I support the Black Lives Matter movement, and attended the local protest in American Canyon, shortly after George Floyd’s death. Most communities of color

have been poorly treated over the years, even if the nature of the mistreatment varies. As white communities become more sensitized to the real story of American History, I hope there will be more understanding and acceptance. If the Black Lives Matter movement facilitates that between white and black, it should bode well for the Latinx community.

7. What is your stance on re-appropriating police funding? What does this mean to you in your role and what policies will you pursue to address this call to action? **In American Canyon, we have a very good relationship with our police. I would not support re-appropriating police funding. With our current support levels, we provide two School Resource Officers and a Community Resource Officer. On the other hand, this does not mean we shouldn't work with the County to increase public and mental health services to American Canyon. I want to increase the size of the pie and not just adjust the size of the slices.**

8. Families of all ranges continue leaving our community because it is too expensive for them to live here. Many families are doing long commutes in order to work here, therefore increasing their carbon footprint, missing on important family time, and much more. What is your commitment and plan to increase workforce housing so families that work here are able to live here? And what will you do to help keep families that are living here to remain here (e.g. increase the quality of life, health and wellness, youth and children activities, etc....) **American Canyon has been the most affordable area in Napa County, but this is quickly evaporating. I am committed to ensuring affordable housing and have advocated several specific policies (see answer to 9a below). Ensuring people can live and work in the same area is critical to economic vitality, traffic congestion relief, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving our quality of life. One step we could consider is modifying our business tax. We could increase the amount and earmark the proceeds to improve our local businesses (and create more jobs). Simultaneously, we could also include provisions that would rebate some of that increase if employers hired local residents or adopted policies that shifted work schedules or installed energy efficiency measures and/or renewable energy.**

9. Do you believe it is the role of elected officials to take policy steps to assure adequate affordable housing? Yes XX No _____

9a. Specifically, what suggestions do you have to make housing more affordable? And would you support requiring new developments to set aside a certain percentage of affordable housing? **I supported streamlining Accessory Dwelling Units and Jr. ADU's and called for grant funding to help pay for the construction costs, in exchange for locking in affordable rents. I also believe we should consider duplexes and triplexes to be a permitted use in Single Family Residential zones. These steps increase affordable housing stock. I also led the change in our Affordable Housing Ordinance. Originally, we only required 10% more affordable units. I was able to persuade the Council to increase it to 15%. We can also work with developers to explain the financial benefits of the State's Affordable Housing Density bonus program and thereby increase more affordable homes. Lastly, I also want to work with our Mobile Home Parks to preserve the affordability and quality of homes there.**

10. According to a report from July 28th, 2020, homelessness has continued to increase for the last several years in Napa County. In 2016, 317 people were reported to be homeless. In 2020, it reported 464 people. What can you do in the role you're running for to address this important and growing issue? **I reviewed the article and it appears the increase may be the result of a better counting process. Nonetheless, addressing the homelessness problem is more of a County issue than a City issue. We can partner with the County and offer space locally to provide public and mental health services to homeless individuals in the American Canyon area.**

11. In the role you're running for, what can you do to help ensure that transportation meets the needs of youth, working people, families, and seniors? **I represent American Canyon on the Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTa). In that capacity, we have reviewed our transit services and made modifications to improve services. I also worked to add a second bus in American Canyon (providing door to door services). Our recent Multi-modal Corridor Study also identified several means of enhancing transit services along the corridor, including running the busses on the shoulders, including "queue jumps" to allow busses to get to the front of traffic at intersections, and allowing busses to extend the green light until they get pass the intersection. This will make taking the bus more appealing and thereby increase our ability to expand run times and services. Since students, low income working people and seniors are our primary customers, any enhancement to transit services will directly benefit them as well.**

12. What action steps will you take to diversify the local workforce in your city or town? Additionally, what hiring processes will you pursue to increase the diversity of your City/Town's staff, and boards and commissions? **As noted above, I was the first to raise the concern that we don't know what our employee's demographic profile looks like. So the first step is to direct staff to start collecting and reporting the results. Based on that assessment, I would augment our recruitment efforts to target underrepresented groups. As for Commissions and Boards, we need to do a better job of outreach—posting the opening is not enough. We can promote openings with our local churches and community organizations. And as noted above, I would work with NCLDC for referrals and potential candidates.**

12a. Do you support a policy where aspiring citizens can serve on boards and commissions? Yes No

13. Racial Gaps In Maternal Mortality Persist. Black mothers die at a rate that's 3.3 times greater than whites, and Native American or Alaskan Native women die at a rate 2.5 times greater than whites, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Would you work to decrease maternal mortality among women of color, protect reproductive rights and a women's right to choose? Yes No

14. What is at least one specific thing you can do as an elected official to address the needs of LGBTQIA+ people? **Two years ago, I supported raising the Pride Flag in June. This year I persuaded Council to include a proclamation to go with the flag raising.**

15. What specific things will you do to defend immigration and the economy in our your jurisdiction? And would you consider making the jurisdiction you're running for a Sanctuary Jurisdiction? **There isn't a lot a City can do, other than direct its police force not to work with an overly aggressive ICE program. This I would support. The State pre-empted our choice to consider Sanctuary City status.**

16. What will you do combat climate change in your area and promote the green economy? **I mentioned some of the programs I would implement above (question 3). I also serve on the Countywide Climate Action Committee, where I have been a strong advocate for taking immediate steps to address this issue. I have been endorsed by Chris Benz and Jim Wilson of Napa Climate NOW.**

I believe we can create new construction jobs by encouraging solar installations, energy retrofitting and other steps to reduce our carbon footprint. I played a strong role in securing a \$5.2 million project to install solar energy/battery storage at City facilities (water and wastewater plants), and more energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems. We should also encourage more tele-commuting, to reduce traffic trips. We can also start public education and awareness programs relating to personal lifestyles that reduce our carbon footprint. Lastly, although it is somewhat indirect, we also need to expand our Firefighting staff, so we can better respond to, or regionally assist in, fighting the relentless fires that are here as a result of global warming.