



We at Experience Volcano Hawaii (EVH) reached out to the two remaining mayoral candidates in the the County Of Hawaii. We asked both candidates five questions that were chosen from a set of questions that were submitted in advance by members of EVH.

We would like to thank both Ikaika Marzo, Mitch Roth and their respective campaign teams for taking the time to answer these questions.

If you are not a member of Experience Volcano Hawaii we encourage you to join our membership by visiting www.experiencevolcano.com/2020special

Questions From EVH Membership As Answered By Mitch Roth

1. Rural transfer stations have recently experienced unexpected closures. In addition to no paper or plastic recycling, many transfer stations now have no timely or legal way to dispose of aluminum, glass, green waste or white goods. What specific actions would you implement to ensure regular and effective waste disposal and recycling?

ANSWER: The first action I would implement is effective and timely communication of changes at transfer stations by the county through all means available. Second, until we have some type of waste management solution, the county should educate and encourage residents to follow the “3 R’s” (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Third, there are some entrepreneurs who are looking at small and medium-scale recycling efforts. I would work through our Solid Waste Division of Environmental Management, the Department of Research & Development, and appropriate state agencies to help aid these efforts, especially as it pertains to collection, storage, and distribution.

2. Due to COVID-19, we have an opportunity to rethink tourism. What type of visitors do you feel our island should target and what tourism changes would you strongly advocate for?

ANSWER: My first concern is to come out of this COVID-19 crisis with our residents healthy and employed. As we begin to recover our economy and welcome back visitors, we should work with the Hawaii Tourism Authority in promoting responsible tourism, and attracting visitors who are interested in our culture, land, and people. The county can support these efforts by creating a better business environment for those who are aligned with this vision. Additionally, plans for any restructuring of tourism should be made in partnership with the various stakeholders of this industry. The bottom line is we will encourage both visitors and residents to treat this island and each other with respect and aloha.

3. Many Hawaii Island communities are particularly dependent on tourism and the businesses that support it. What is your plan to support industries such as vacation rentals, in places such as Volcano, that don't have the infrastructure and/or the need for larger hotel/resort developments?

ANSWER: Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy here on Hawaii Island. Thus, we need to change the culture of county government to be more business friendly, especially to support businesses such as appropriate vacation rentals that don't have the infrastructure or need for larger hotel/resort developments. As Mayor, I intend to support the vacation rental industry, in appropriate areas by standardizing the interpretation of our laws regarding transient vacation rentals (TVR). Hawai'i County's TVR laws themselves are currently being interpreted in a way that is restrictive and unclear to many TVR owners. We need to have clearer, black and white interpretations of our

current laws and their enforcement so that all TVR owners are following the same playbook. Additionally, I am opposed to increasing property taxes for our county. For too long, Hawai'i County has been relying on property taxes to generate revenue, and our residents can't handle more increases.

Hawai'i County also has a major problem with a lengthy and cumbersome permitting process that prohibits vacation rental owners, businesses, and even local families from thriving. As we all know time is money, and the cost of doing business in Hawai'i County can be significantly reduced by streamlining the permitting process. This is one of my first priorities as Mayor.

4. Sections of Hwy 11 between Mountain View and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park are in poor condition. How would you work with the State to prioritize its repair and do you support signage on Hwy 11 welcoming visitors to Volcano, the gateway community to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park?

ANSWER: The belt roads around the island (Hwys 11 and 19) serve an important and vital role in ensuring connection during natural disasters and emergencies. Maintenance of this vital resource is one of the highest public works priority and my administration will work with our state and federal partners to ensure essential repairs are planned for and implemented in an expeditious manner. I support providing additional signage and other communications for travelers and visitors along our major roadways, especially when emergency conditions require them. I also support the development of a stronger broadband and telecommunications capability throughout the island, especially in our more rural areas. Such capability will allow for visitor information to be provided to individual devices without impinging on the natural beauty of the island.

5. What would you do to support police, medical and emergency services in rural areas such as Volcano?

ANSWER: I have been a supporter of police services in my current position as the County Prosecuting Attorney and have supported the addition of more officers throughout the island. I appreciate the small number of officers on a shift in various rural areas in the county and where financially possible will support more positions. I am aware that we have added positions recently but have had difficulty filling them to the full extent. My office has worked closely with the Neighborhood Watch program for many years, which has been very helpful in supporting policing activities in many communities around the island. Regarding medical services, I am aware of and fully support the effort by the Hawaii Health Services Corporation and Bay Clinic to increase access to primary care services. I also support efforts to encourage APRN and PA services in rural areas, including Volcano. Telehealth services are also part of this initiative. Finally, an additional ambulance in the Puna area would help emergency services in Upper Puna and Ka'u. CERT teams are also available for natural disaster and emergency situations.

Mission Statement

To promote, perpetuate and celebrate the rich cultural heritage and environmental wonders of the Volcano area as an exceptional destination.

Steering Committee

Experience Volcano Hawaii (EVH) has grown substantially with its goals, leadership and outreach. Listed below are members who are the active participants in the administration of EVH. The administrative body is called the "Steering Committee."

Lorna Larsen-Jeyte, Marilyn Nicholson, Jim Wilson, Ira Ono, Mike Nelson, Jesse Tunison, Pua Norris, Janet Coney, Lucretia Worster, Chris Becker

NOTE

Experience Volcano Hawaii is a non-profit organization that does not endorse any political candidate. We will simply feature responses from candidates on issues, topics and agendas of interest to voters in the Volcano Area.