



**City of St. Helena
Special City Council Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2026 @ 4:15 PM
Vintage Hall Cafeteria - 1st Floor
465 Main Street, St. Helena CA**

PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Public Forum" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.

Public comment for City Council meetings will be accepted via email via to publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. All other public comments received after the deadline will be attached to the item the next business day or soon thereafter. Public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the online City Council agenda.

To ensure interpreters are available, requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance by calling the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 968-2640 or emailing cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov.

The schedule of upcoming meetings and published meeting agendas can be found on the City of St. Helena website at cityofsthelena.gov.

Servicios de interpretación en español durante la reunión pueden ser solicitados por el público. Para asegurar que los intérpretes estén disponibles, los servicios tienen que ser solicitados al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión llamando a la oficina de la Secretaria de la Ciudad al (707) 968-2640 o por correo electrónico a cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov.

El horario de las reuniones publicadas y próximas puede ser localizado en el sitio de web de la Ciudad en cityofsthelena.gov

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor: Paul Dohring, Vice Mayor: Michelle Deasy, City Council Members: Aaron Barak, Kate Spadarotto

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. PUBLIC FORUM

Under California law, public comments at special meetings are limited to subjects on the agenda only. Therefore public comment will take place during consideration of the item. Each person's comments shall be limited to 4 minutes.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Applicant interviews for the vacant City Council seat.

The applicants are:

1. Scott Diaz
2. Daniel Hale
3. Michael Haley
4. Michelle Liu Covell
5. Joshua Parke
6. Bonnie Schoch
7. Mark Smithers

Prepared By: Andrew Bradley, Program Manager (City Clerk)

6. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular City Council meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2026 at 6 p.m.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, and at Vintage Hall, 465 Main Street, St. Helena, California on May 20, 2026.

Andrew Bradley, City Clerk

In Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please call the City Clerk's Office (707) 967-2792. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

CHALLENGING DECISIONS OF CITY ENTITIES

The time limit within which to commence any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City of St. Helena is governed by Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, unless a shorter limitation period is specified by any other provision, including without limitation Government Code section 65009 applicable to many land use and zoning decisions, Government Code section 66499.37 applicable to the Subdivision Map Act, and Public Resources Code section 21167 applicable to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under Section 1094.6, any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which such decision becomes final. Any lawsuit or legal challenge, which is not filed within that 90-day period, will be barred. Government Code section 65009 and 66499.37, and Public Resources Code section 21167, impose shorter limitations periods and requirements, including timely service in addition to filing.

If a person wishes to challenge the above actions in court, they may be limited to raising only those issues they or someone else raised at the meeting described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of St. Helena, at or prior to the meeting. In addition, judicial challenge may be limited or barred where the interested party has not sought and exhausted all available administrative remedies.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL RECEIVED AFTER THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Any supplemental writings or documents distributed to a majority of the City Council regarding any item on this Agenda, after the posting of the Agenda, will be available for public review in the City Clerk's Office located at 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California, during normal business hours and by appointment. In addition, such writings or documents will be made available on the City's website at cityofsthenela.gov and will be available for public review at the

respective meeting.



Agendas Report to the Special City Council

Agenda Section: NEW BUSINESS

Department: City Clerk

DATE:	May 26, 2026
FROM:	Andrew Bradley, Program Manager (City Clerk)
SUBJECT:	Applicant interviews for the vacant City Council seat. The applicants are: 1. Scott Diaz 2. Daniel Hale 3. Michael Haley 4. Michelle Liu Covell 5. Joshua Parke 6. Bonnie Schoch 7. Mark Smithers

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Hale, Daniel_application
2. Haley, Michael_application
3. Liu Covell, Michelle_application
4. Schoch, Bonnie_application
5. Smithers, Mark_application



DATE AND TIME RECEIVED



NOTE: THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED APPLICATION MUST BE FILED WITH THE ST. HELENA CITY CLERK BY
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026, AT 5:00 P.M.

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE ST. HELENA CITY COUNCIL

This application is to fill a vacancy on the St. Helena City Council. The St. Helena City Council will publicly-review all submitted applications where the applicants meet the qualifications. The Council will hold a public interview process for each candidate on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, and the appointment at the regular City Council meeting Tuesday, May 26, 2026. The applicant interviews will take place at Vintage Hall (465 Main Street, St. Helena). The term of office will be from May 26, 2026, through November 2026.

This application is a public document, although your personal information will be redacted. Your application will be compiled with other applications and considered by the St. Helena City Council as a part of a noticed public meeting.

Only St. Helena residents who are registered voters in St. Helena will be eligible for appointment.

Name: Daniel Hale

Residence Address: [REDACTED] St Helena CA 94574

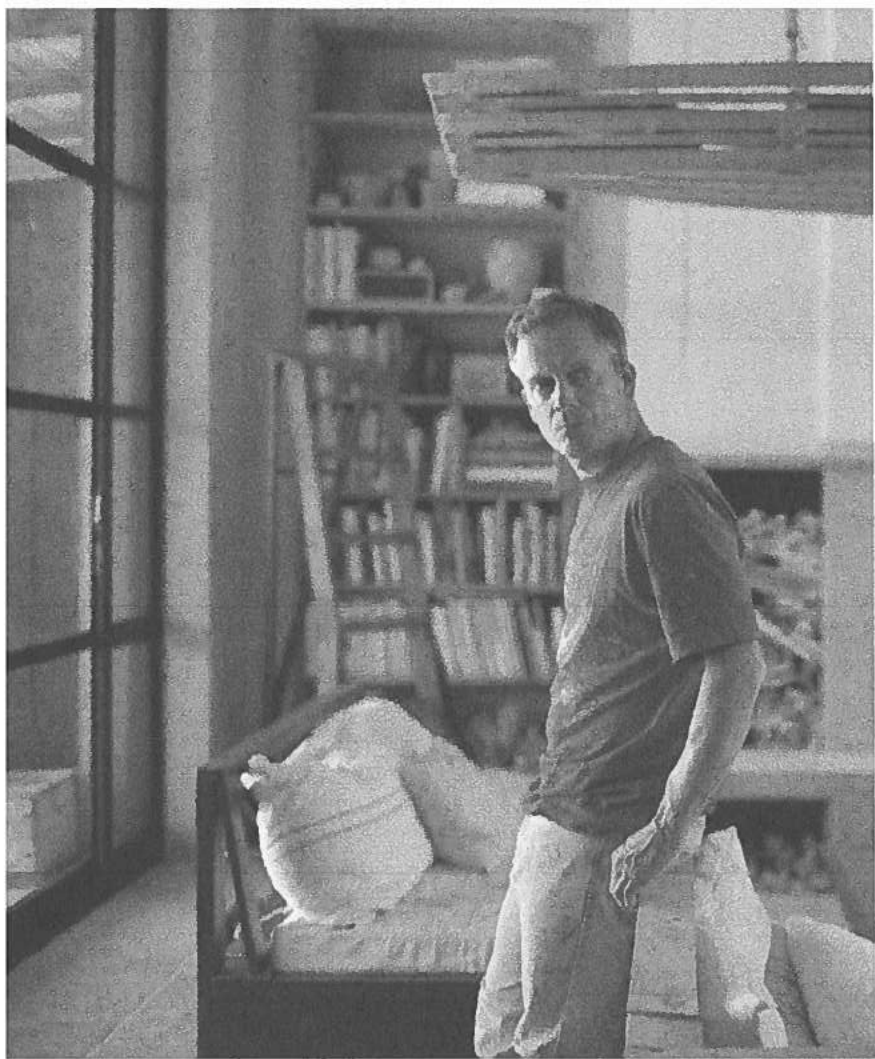
Mailing Address (if different): [REDACTED] Helena CA 94574

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Best Phone Number to Reach You: [REDACTED]

Are you currently a registered voter and a resident of the City of St. Helena, or will be at the time of an appointment? yes (yes or no)

- Please include your resume and answer the following questions on a separate sheet(s) of paper.



Projects range from the design and creation of furniture, sculpture and lighting, to interior and architectural design.

Living in Saint Helena, he works directly with clients as well as in collaboration with other creatives (artisans, architects, designers) on commercial and residential opportunities, wherever they may arise. Engagements begin with observation, and utilize context, intuition and tradition to inform solutions.

His work explores the peculiar alchemy and interplay of art, architecture, and design, creating objects and projects that fold together and transition between these disciplines. The intersections and expressions of materials, light, siting and the physical experience of the user are central to his vision.

(continued on next page)

Reasons for Applying

1. Why do you want to be appointed to the Council?

I believe I have been fortunate to thrive in St. Helena. My family has embraced this community, and in turn, this community has embraced us. Through the years, I have had the opportunity to engage with a broad cross-section of St. Helena, which has given me a deeper appreciation for the many perspectives, experiences, and institutions that together make our community whole.

I believe we need to develop a housing strategy that is specifically targeted to producing actual workforce housing opportunities and threads those solutions into the fabric of town in a way that is sensitive. I believe we can create policy changes that do that. We need to spend the time to better understand the nature and dynamics of creating viable and vibrant workforce housing and we need to carry that understanding with us as we consider policy, proposals and fruitful partners.

The range and texture of my personal and professional experiences in St. Helena have given me meaningful insight into both our strengths and our challenges. I believe those experiences, combined with my commitment to this community, can be put to work in service of the town I have come to know and love.

2. Service as a City Council Member easily could require 10 or more hours per week reviewing council agenda packets, responding to citizen communications, meeting with constituents, and attending various regional and local subcommittee meetings, and council meetings. How much time per week do you have to devote to City Council service?

I am self-employed and I have been fortunate to have built my career and thrive by working vigorously, collaboratively, staying focused, and finding efficient solutions to complex challenges. I understand the value of time management and also the value in not stretching too thin or taking on too many projects that I am not prepared to complete or give my full energy to. I have witnessed firsthand the commitment and responsibility that serving on the City Council requires, and I understand the time, energy, and dedication the position demands. I am fully prepared to commit myself to that responsibility and the work ahead.

3. If appointed, do you plan on running for election in November 2026? YES

Experience, Qualifications, Education

4. What qualifications, life experiences, and educational background do you have that will enable you to make sound decisions in the best long-term interest of the community?

I hold a degree in Architecture, and creativity has been a defining thread throughout both my professional and personal life. While still in college, I opened a gallery where I created and sold art and design pieces, an experience that helped launch a career rooted in creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.

My work in art and design has given me opportunities to work on projects across the country and around the world, allowing me to collaborate with talented, passionate people from many different

backgrounds and disciplines. Those experiences have reinforced the value of curiosity, teamwork, and remaining open to new ideas and perspectives. I value collaborations and continually seek opportunities to learn from others.

I have had the opportunity to work on projects both large and small, with organizations of every size and with personalities equally varied. Through those experiences, I have developed an organic and supportive leadership style and a belief that the best outcomes come from a team-centered approach built on listening, respect, and shared purpose.

I have also had the opportunity to travel, live, and spend meaningful time in different communities. Those experiences have deepened my appreciation for St. Helena while also offering perspective on approaches and ideas that may help us think differently and continue improving our community.

Locally, with the sturdy support and partnership of my wife Christine I have rented commercial space and operated a retail business in St. Helena, and I made the intentional decision to base my design business here. I understand the opportunities and challenges that come with operating a business in our town and have experienced firsthand the realities faced by local business community and residents.

My experiences have taught me that thoughtful planning, measured decision-making, and a steady long-term approach often produce the strongest results. I believe the breadth and texture of my personal and professional experiences enrich my perspective and would serve me well as a member of the City Council.

5. Please describe your community service and government participation in St. Helena or elsewhere.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to participate in a wide range of community projects and civic efforts that reflect my commitment to St. Helena and the people who make this town special. My involvement has included school fundraisers, wine auction initiatives, years as a youth soccer coach while our three children flourished in St. Helena, rewarding participation with Troop 1, and longstanding engagement, support and volunteer work with Nimbus Arts.

I also had the opportunity to work with the Napa Valley Museum team to help envision and bring the MAC - Napa Valley Museum of Art & Culture. to our community. (And on a side note, don't miss the newly installed Wyeth exhibition.) I strongly believe in the power of the arts to inspire, connect people, and broaden perspectives, enriching both individuals and the community as a whole.

I served for four years as a St. Helena Planning Commissioner, including as Vice Chair. That experience gave me a strong foundation in understanding community priorities, dynamics and perspectives, as well as a deep familiarity with municipal code and the intersection of local regulations with state law. It also provided a firsthand understanding of how the civic process functions and the importance of transparency, thoughtful deliberation, and public engagement.

I also served on the St. Helena Infrastructure Task Force, where we took a deep dive into the interaction and future potential of the civic assets we are fortunate to have and responsible for safeguarding. In addition, I

served on the St. Helena Water Board. I toured the Stralla plant and gained an appreciation for both the infrastructure challenges St. Helena faces and the practical solutions available to address them.

I have also had the privilege of sitting alongside dedicated volunteers and true believers working to create workforce housing opportunities in St. Helena. I was proud to serve as President of Our Town St. Helena and continue to value the tremendous work the organization does and the important resource it remains for our community.

Throughout these experiences, I have come to appreciate that strong communities are built through participation, stewardship, and a willingness to engage thoughtfully in shaping the future.

Issues, Priorities, Concerns

6. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City?

Rebuilding trust must be a priority. That means doing the work necessary to restore a culture and pattern of transparency while collaboratively developing a thoughtful, methodical long-range plan for St. Helena, one that both preserves and fully harnesses the productivity and potential of our community resources, both physical and human.

We need to rebuild not only public confidence, but also a shared understanding of who we are, the story we tell ourselves, and a realistic path toward realizing the tremendous opportunities and magnetism that St. Helena is fortunate to possess. I believe we need to become more comfortable acknowledging our shortcomings, mistakes, and areas where improvement is needed. Recognizing problems is not weakness; it is the first step toward solving them. Communities move forward when they can honestly assess where they are and have confidence in their ability to do better.

Too often, difficult issues can become buried beneath defensiveness or an unrealistic culture of forced positivity, a tendency to avoid hard conversations rather than engage with them. Facing challenges directly and facing inconvenient or challenging truths does not diminish our community; it strengthens it.

We also need a clearer understanding of the distinct roles within our City Council/City Manager form of government. A critical part of that understanding is recognizing the importance of checks and balances. Professional staff naturally bring their own expertise, priorities, and perspectives, which may at times differ from those of elected officials or appointed commissioners. That should not be viewed as conflict, it is a healthy and necessary tension within a functioning system.

Supporting staff and asking difficult questions are not mutually exclusive. Strong governance requires both. Thoughtful challenge, accountability, and respectful scrutiny are not signs of dysfunction; they are essential components of a system working as intended.

7. If you were appointed to the Council, what would be your top three priorities?

Forming consensus around how we restore public confidence, and committing to that process, is essential. Strong communities and effective local government depend on trust, transparency, and a shared understanding that decisions are being made with integrity and in the community's best interest.

We should also establish a clear mission statement that can serve as the foundation for a comprehensive, holistic master plan. That plan should provide a unifying framework for addressing critical issues such as workforce housing, economic vitality, vibrancy, infrastructure investment, and long-term community sustainability. Without a clearly defined vision and measurable goals, it becomes difficult to align priorities or sustain progress over time.

At the same time, we must reaffirm our commitment to preserving the character and qualities that make St. Helena special and that drew so many of us to live and work here in the first place. Any path forward should recognize that growth and change do not have to come at the expense of community identity. Preserving the unique character, scale, and sense of place that define St. Helena should remain a guiding principle as we plan for the future.

8. What strategies can be undertaken to address the City's fiscal challenges, improve the City's economic health, and maintain and enhance quality of life?

I believe we need to create a long-term, holistic plan and framework that we can steadily grow into over time. We did not arrive at our current condition overnight, and a lasting, sustainable solution will require thoughtful planning, commitment, and patience.

We are fortunate to have a diverse inventory of City-owned properties and assets. Many of these sites are underperforming and, in some cases, deteriorating. That represents not only a failure of stewardship, but also a significant missed opportunity.

Over the years, we have undertaken thoughtful studies and initiatives, including SHAPE and the Infrastructure Task Force, but we have too often lacked the direction and follow-through necessary to translate ideas into action. As time passes, that pattern has become entrenched.

The work ahead will not be easy, but we do have the resources and opportunities to create a solid, forward-looking plan. If we are deliberate and disciplined in our approach, we can build a framework that not only protects and enhances our quality of life, but also strengthens our financial footing and better positions us to address our long-term infrastructure needs.

Values, Vision, Approach

9. What vision do you have for the future of St. Helena?

I believe we need a balanced approach that embraces both preservation and innovation. Protecting what makes St. Helena special does not mean resisting change, and pursuing progress does not require sacrificing our identity. The strongest path forward thoughtfully honors both.

I also believe we can foster a healthier understanding and appreciation among the many people who make up and contribute to our community, longtime residents, newcomers, transplants, visitors, and those drawn here from elsewhere. While experiences and perspectives may differ, they share a common appreciation for St. Helena and our Valley. Rather than viewing those differences as divisions, we should see them as opportunities to strengthen and broaden our community.

St. Helena is a treasured place, and I believe we can, and must, do a better job of defining and shaping how we all graciously share that resource. By building partnerships rooted in shared values and common purpose, we can create a future for St. Helena that reflects the best of who we are, a future we can proudly recognize, proudly participate in shaping, and just as proudly pass along to future generations of St. Helenans.

10. How would you resolve a situation where your personal philosophy may be considered at odds with the majority view regarding what is best for the City?

I operate with the understanding that I am NOT always right, and that my reflexive approach may not always be the best approach for the challenge at hand. I believe it is critical to observe and truly intake other points of view and at the end of the day ask yourself. "How could I have done that differently?" Or, "how could I have been more effective?..." Compromise is a vital progress making tool.

You may also provide any additional information or comments you feel would assist City Council in considering your application.

Please note: At the time you would be named to the St. Helena City Council, you must be:

- **At least 18 years of age,**
- **A registered voter in St. Helena; and**
- **A resident residing within the City limits of St. Helena.**

You must maintain St. Helena residency and registered voter status throughout your term of office.

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Also, at the time of appointment (and annually as well as at the completion of your service), you will be required to complete and file a public Form 700 Statement with the California Fair Political Practices Commission. Form 700 filings allow the public to know of any potential conflicts of interest related to your public service. These conflicts can relate to employment, property ownership, loans and gifts, stock ownership, and more. You are also required to disclose certain financial interests of your spouse (if applicable).

During your term on the City Council, you will be required to identify any potential conflicts (often with the assistance of the City Attorney) and to recuse yourself from voting on or otherwise influencing any action that might cause a financial or other conflict.

Please sign and return this form with the questions answered via an email to Andrew Bradley, St. Helena City Clerk, at cityclerk@cityofsthelela.gov. The City Clerk will confirm receiving your emailed application, if you do not receive confirmation, please call the City Clerk at (707) 968-2743. You may also drop off the form and questions at St. Helena City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California. Please address the envelope to the City Clerk.

Please do not mail the form, as it may not get to the City by the deadline. If you have any questions about this application, please call the City Clerk's office at (707)968-2743.

I Daniel Hale (print name) swear/affirm that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 15 May 2026

Only St. Helena residents who are registered voters in St. Helena will be eligible for appointment.

Name:

Michael Haley

Residence Address:

[REDACTED]

St. Helena, CA 94574

Mailing Address (if different):

n/a

E-mail:

[REDACTED]

Best Phone Number to

Reach You:

[REDACTED]

Are you currently a registered voter and a resident of the City of St. Helena, or will be at the time of an appointment?

☒ Yes

☐ No

(yes or no)

Applicant Affirmation and Signature

I

Michael Haley

(print name) swear/affirm that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature:

Michael Haley

Date:

May 11, 2026

RESUME

Michael Haley

St. Helena, Ca 94574

Current: retired, age 72

Education:

B.S. Psychology Michigan State University 1975

M. S. Psychology West Georgia State University 1978

Work Experience:

Grape Grower, Napa County 2003 to 2015, oversaw family farm producing wine grapes for 14 harvests. Approximately 400 to 500 tons per year.

1980 to 2000 Human Resources, mainly recruiting, last five years owned an executive search firm focused on engineering in sterile pharmaceutical manufacturing.

1975 to 1996 Psychotherapist both at mental health clinics and private practice. CA MFCC license 1984.

Napa County Community Service, dates are approximate

Napa County General Plan steering committee member 2005 to 2008

District Representative, Napa County Parks and Open Space District, 2012 to 2015

Editorial Board Member, Napa Register, 2006 to 2010 (not sure on exact dates, 4-5 years)

President, Napa Valley Taxpayers Alliance, 2007 to 2009

Measure A citizens oversight committee member (Flood Control Project) two years

Citizens committee, County Traffic Plan 2009

Member of the first Napa County Groundwater Resources Committee, 2012

Member, Watershed Information and Conservation Council (WICC) 2012 to 2015

Hwy 29 Corridor Committee for American Canyon 2014

Vine Trail founding board member, 2008 to 2012

Additional community service:

State of Oregon Coordinator for FAIR, Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism 2019-2021

President of Ojai First, neighborhood group opposed to increasing short term rentals, Ojai, CA 2016-2018

Why do you want to be appointed to the council?

I want to do something to help St. Helena. I moved here after living in Napa for years, my wife is from here, and although I am new to St. Helena I am not new to the county. A group of locals contacted me and asked me to run, so I agreed to do so if that is the best way I can help.

How much time per week do you have to devote to City Council service?

I'm retired with no personal obligations so as many as needed, 20, 30 or more.

If appointed, do you plan on running for election in November 2026?

Yes.

What qualifications, life experiences, and educational background do you have that will enable you to make sound decisions in the best long-term interest of the community?

Besides the experiences listed on my resume of mostly local political activism, as President of the Napa Valley Taxpayers Alliance I spoke out about the pensions and pay for the Napa County and Napa city firefighters, police and other employees at that time. I met with all the union personnel, city council and county supervisors, and got heavily involved in the contract negotiations, this was in 2007 mainly. At that time I was a lay expert on California Public employee pension plans, and wrote regular columns on the same, that were often picked up and printed by other publications. This will help me with the same issues with the City of St. Helena, albeit it was a while ago. I do remember quite a bit.

After about ten years of political activism I ended up as an elected official, the Napa County Parks and Open Space District, and being on both sides of that is valuable. The first thing I thought when I got up on that podium is "where are we going to get some money?" That is something you never think about as an activist, you are more likely to think, why are they spending so much money?" So I think it is good that I have had to see local politics from both sides of that coin, and the tensions that play out on the financial as well as other issues facing a community.

I wrote a political column called napablogger for about ten years, most of that time was for the Napa Valley Register, and regularly examined local political issues and learned quite a bit about local politics doing that. I attended most County Supervisor meetings for a good ten years, at one four year stretch I did not miss a single meeting. I also regularly attended City of Napa council meetings, and occasionally St. Helena city council and Calistoga as well. I spoke on the pension issue at the St. Helena city council at one time, as well as the local rotary club that meets at noon.

All that gave me a good idea about how local government works in California, the structure of the meetings with, for example, public comment on any subject allowed at the beginning of meetings, no real response allowed from council persons, Brown Act, need to agendaize important issues, etc, are all things I am familiar with and will help me step into the role with less training.

Please describe your community service and government participation in St. Helena or elsewhere.

I have pretty much covered that already. Although I am new in St. Helena I have attended some city council and planning commission meetings along with a few financial committee and parks and rec meetings, and watched more on line.

What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City?

There are many, financial deficit, water quality and cost, affordable housing for workers, roads and infrastructure, but the most important issue is for the community to come together and work out a plan to make things work.

St. Helena needs a new future, it needs an overall goal with large community buy-in that we can all work toward and feel a part of and I do not believe we have that now. It's not black and white, there is plenty of interest in our government in the community, the problem is that there are two groups that are fairly divided and not a lot of making progress toward a bigger goal is really happening.

We need to find a way to bridge that gap and it is only going to come through community engagement and dialogue.

If you were appointed to the Council, what would be your top three priorities?

Right now it would be hiring the best possible City Manager we can find. Second would be doing whatever I can to improve the relations between the city employees and the community, which have been damaged by the recent termination of the City Manager. We seriously need to reflect on why we can't keep a city manager here. Third would be maintaining the ongoing business of the city.

What strategies can be undertaken to address the City's fiscal challenges, improve the City's economic health, and maintain and enhance quality of life?

What vision do you have for the future of St. Helena?

I'll take these two questions together as they are closely related. As I mentioned above, there is a divide in the city between two groups, one could be characterized as those who have been here a long time and their culture is rooted in a Napa that I will describe as a close-knit farming community. The other are people who moved here as the result of tourism for the most part, tend to be wealthier, retired and here more for the lifestyle based on a tourism economy. It could be described as a class conflict, but it is more specific than that.

These are generalizations, but anyone who has lived here a while will at least have a feel for what I mean. A lot of the conflict comes down to opposition from the two groups, where the key issue that is debated is tourism related, hotels, wine, tasting rooms, high end fashion shops, art, etc. One group is generally opposed to anything tourism related, the other generally supports it and is surprised that anyone could be so adamantly opposed to something that will help our economy and is what Napa is known for.

My natural sympathies are with the locals group and not the newer pro tourism group. As time has gone on, however, I realize that the fact is that Napa has changed and we are not a farm based community with some tourism any more, we are a tourism community with some farming, and that has made a lot of difference. Our economy is based on tourism now, we need tourism for business and tax revenue for the government. We have to face that fact, which I have gradually had to do.

I believe that underneath this conflict for the locals is that they woke up one day, and the whole county had changed into something they felt they didn't belong to. One sees constant requests for things like five and dime stores, local stores that no longer exist, low priced restaurants, etc. These are community features that people long for now and made them feel connected and that the community was here to serve their interests and needs, and not the interests of people who are from out of town and just here to make money.

I think, however, that the reality is that in order to pay our bills we are going to have to have more tourism because that is simply what is available. Investors are not coming in with offers to put in a five and dime store. They are coming in with offers for more hotels. We do have a serious budget deficit and the only argument is how much?

But I think we can do both, but it is going to take some working together and community building.

My idea is to first get the community to debate, discuss, dialogue on what we are going to do about this tourism economy issue. I have been reading a lot about community building, and in fact recently had a zoom meet up with a national expert on such, Rich Harwood. He has been called into communities that are shattered by events like a school shooting, or in some cases just more normal break downs to help heal situations.

One thought then is to have a series of community meetings around the issue of creating a viable future for St. Helena with someone like Harwood as moderator, to come to terms with our realistic economic situation and settle on a path forward.

I believe if we work on it together we can accomplish both goals, a strengthened local community that comes about as a result of an improved local economy based on some more tourism development.

I note that this appears to be happening in the city of Napa. They have built a tourism economy downtown and they are starting to have the money to do amenities for locals like the recent decision to have a skating rink, something the locals have been clamoring for for decades now.

One specific idea I have is that it appears there are 3-4 hotel possibilities on the table. What about the community getting together somehow and going over the various offers and picking one, the best one that most people may buy in on? I would support one more hotel and that seems the best way to get it.

If it were positioned as a way to get, say \$3 million a year in TOT, it could be designated for reducing water bills. That way it would serve locals needs as well as tourism related businesses.

We have to find a way to both meet the needs of the local population as well as the wine/tourism business. The local population needs lower priced and local oriented stores and services, the tourism business needs high end visitors. The city government needs cash from hotels. We can find a way to dovetail those needs so that it works for everyone over time, and everyone has an opportunity to feel connected to St. Helena.

How would you resolve a situation where your personal philosophy may be considered at odds with the majority view regarding what is best for the City?

For one thing, I would make sure the voters know what my personal philosophy is so they know what they are getting when they choose me. That is part of the reason for the extensive comments here that anyone can read.

The answer here is that it depends, it depends on how important the issue is. If it is a relatively minor issue, I would be fine going with the majority view. If it were a major issue that seriously were a moral objection on my part, I would vote my conscience. If people wanted to recall me or vote me out, I would live with that a lot better myself.



NOTE: THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED APPLICATION MUST BE FILED WITH THE ST. HELENA CITY CLERK BY
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026, AT 5:00 P.M.

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE ST. HELENA CITY COUNCIL

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This application is a public document, although your personal information will be redacted. Your application will be compiled with other applications and considered by the St. Helena City Council as a part of a noticed public meeting.

Only St. Helena residents who are registered voters in St. Helena will be eligible for appointment.

Name: Michelle Liu Covell

Residence Address: [REDACTED] St Helena

Mailing Address (if different): _____

E-mail: michelle@covellarchitects.com

Best Phone Number to Reach You: [REDACTED]

Are you currently a registered voter and a resident of the City of St. Helena, or will be at the time of an appointment? yes (yes or no)

- Please include your resume and answer the following questions on a separate sheet(s) of paper.
see
resume

(continued on next page)

Reasons for Applying See cover letter

1. Why do you want to be appointed to the Council?
2. Service as a City Council Member easily could require 10 or more hours per week reviewing council agenda packets, responding to citizen communications, meeting with constituents, and attending various regional and local subcommittee meetings, and council meetings. How much time per week do you have to devote to City Council service?
3. If appointed, do you plan on running for election in November 2026?

Experience, Qualifications, Education

4. What qualifications, life experiences, and educational background do you have that will enable you to make sound decisions in the best long-term interest of the community?
5. Please describe your community service and government participation in St. Helena or elsewhere.

Issues, Priorities, Concerns

6. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City?
7. If you were appointed to the Council, what would be your top three priorities?
8. What strategies can be undertaken to address the City's fiscal challenges, improve the City's economic health, and maintain and enhance quality of life?

Values, Vision, Approach

9. What vision do you have for the future of St. Helena?
10. How would you resolve a situation where your personal philosophy may be considered at odds with the majority view regarding what is best for the City?

You may also provide any additional information or comments you feel would assist City Council in considering your application.

Please note: At the time you would be named to the St. Helena City Council, you must be:

- **At least 18 years of age,**
- **A registered voter in St. Helena; and**
- **A resident residing within the City limits of St. Helena.**

You must maintain St. Helena residency and registered voter status throughout your term of office.

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Also, at the time of appointment (and annually as well as at the completion of your service), you will be required to complete and file a public Form 700 Statement with the California Fair Political Practices Commission. Form 700 filings allow the public to know of any potential conflicts of interest related to your public service. These conflicts can relate to employment, property ownership, loans and gifts, stock ownership, and more. You are also required to disclose certain financial interests of your spouse (if applicable).

During your term on the City Council, you will be required to identify any potential conflicts (often with the assistance of the City Attorney) and to recuse yourself from voting on or otherwise influencing any action that might cause a financial or other conflict.

Please sign and return this form with the questions answered via an email to Andrew Bradley, St. Helena City Clerk, at cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov. The City Clerk will confirm receiving your emailed application, if you do not receive confirmation, please call the City Clerk at (707) 968-2743. You may also drop off the form and questions at St. Helena City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California. Please address the envelope to the City Clerk.

Please do not mail the form, as it may not get to the City by the deadline. If you have any questions about this application, please call the City Clerk's office at (707)968-2743.

I Michelle Liu Covell (print name) swear/affirm that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 5.18.26

Dear City Council and the community,

I would like to apply for the vacant seat of City Council.

As both a resident and current Planning Commissioner, I have become deeply engaged in the issues facing our community and the processes by which local government serves the public.

I have developed a strong appreciation for the importance of transparency, fairness, thoughtful planning, and respectful public service.

I am applying because I believe I can bring an independent, engaged, and solutions-oriented perspective to the Council during an important time for the City.

I understand that serving on the City Council is a substantial commitment, public accessibility, active participation, and open dialogue. Public service is not something I approach casually, and I recognize the responsibility and professionalism the position requires. I believe I can devote 10 hours a week to the role.

At this moment I cannot answer whether I intend to run for election in November 2026.

If the experience feels right, I would welcome the opportunity to continue serving the community if the residents choose to support me.

Serving on the Planning Commission has given me firsthand experience evaluating land use issues, reviewing public process requirements, balancing competing interests, and understanding how local decisions impact residents, businesses, applicants, and the broader character of St. Helena. I have spent significant time reviewing municipal procedures, planning documents, staff reports, and public policy issues. I believe sound decision-making requires careful listening, preparation, critical thinking, and the ability to evaluate both immediate impacts and long-term consequences.

As an architect practicing in St. Helena and the Bay Area, I have extensive experience navigating complex regulatory processes. Through my work as a project manager and architect at large firms in San Francisco, and now as Director of Operations for my firm, I've managed large multidisciplinary teams through challenging, one-of-a-kind projects.

One of my strengths is learning quickly and continually improving processes. My work requires coordinating overlapping disciplines, structural, architectural, civil, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and landscape etc., while balancing both the big-picture design vision and the detailed execution needed to make projects successful.

The City faces several significant issues that will require thoughtful leadership in the coming years. I have read the Blackberg Group reports. St Helena has been given a chance to make significant improvements.

Among the most important are maintaining fiscal stability, managing growth responsibly while preserving what we love about this community, improving public trust and confidence in local government, supporting local businesses, and addressing infrastructure and service needs in a financially sustainable manner. Like many small communities, St. Helena must balance economic realities with maintaining the quality of life that makes the city unique.

If appointed, my top three priorities would be:

1. Strengthening transparency, accountability, and public trust in local government;
2. Infrastructure such as water, sewer, and circulation, making sure the foundation of basic needs are secure, safe, with the focus on prioritization and implementation strategies
3. Ensuring balanced and thoughtful planning that preserves the character of St. Helena while allowing the community to adapt responsibly to growth, to continue to attract not just tourists that support the shops, also young families to see the amazing town this is for raising children, so that we can continue to enjoy the beauty that this community brings.

Saint Helena's sense of place is what makes this town unique from the rest of the towns in Napa Valley. We have to protect that, but also be ready to adapt to the times, create a sustainable balance, that brings the whole community up together. There are reasons why people move and live here, and decide to raise their families here. We need to invest in those reasons, and this means building community energy.

My vision for the future of St. Helena is a community that remains financially stable, well-governed, and connected to the values that have historically defined it. I believe St. Helena can continue to evolve thoughtfully without losing its identity. I want residents to feel confident that their local government operates with integrity, professionalism, and openness, and that decisions are made fairly and with the long-term interests of the entire community in mind. I also see a thriving city. Once we get a fully aligned strategic plan in place, with the consensus and trust of the community, I believe this town can achieve great things. It will take hard work, and planning. And this is what I do.

I also understand that public service requires working collaboratively with people who may hold different perspectives. In situations where my personal philosophy differs from the majority view, I would approach the matter respectfully, listen carefully to all viewpoints, rely on facts and policy analysis, and remain open-minded throughout the decision-making process. Effective governance requires the ability to disagree professionally while continuing to work constructively toward solutions that serve the broader community interest. It also requires open dialogue, independent and thoughtful decision-making, and a willingness to do your own homework.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to apply for this important role. I would be honored to serve the residents of St. Helena and contribute positively to the City's future.

Sincerely,
Michelle Covell

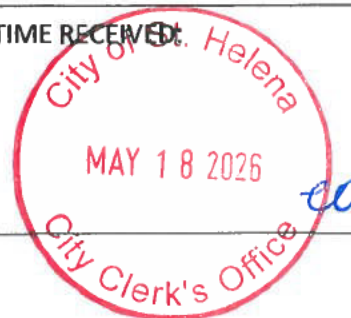
PS. My letter for when I applied for the Planning Commission still holds true as well.

Michelle Liu Covell
[REDACTED], Saint Helena
[REDACTED]

2019 - Current	Mom
11.2015 - Current	Covell Architects Partner, Architect, Director of Operations, Project Manager
7.2025 - Current	Saint Helena Planning Commissioner
2026 - Current	Saint Helena Homegrown Sole proprietor
2011	Architect , California License # C33300
2013	Gardening and Composting Educator Certified , Garden for the Environment
2010	Revit Building Information Modeling (BIM) Certificate
2009-2011	Architect Registration Examinations (9) and Architect Internship Program Completed
2009	LEED AP (BD+C) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional in Building Design and Construction
5.2006	Masters in Architecture , California College of the Arts
8.2005 - 5.2006	Structures I and II Graduate Student Instructor , California College of the Arts
5.2003	Bachelors of Arts in Architecture , UC Berkeley, Magna Cum Laude, Dean's list all semesters
9.2011 - 11.2015	William Duff Architects Architect, Project Manager <i>Designed and managed multiple private residences through design and construction</i>
6.2006 - 9.2011	Hornberger + Worstell Inc. Associate, Designer, ARE Coordinator, BIM Manager <i>Master Planning Gohtong Highlands Resort, Master Planning and Design, Chongli China</i> <i>River Run Village, Master Planning and Design, Sun Valley Idaho</i> <i>Higher Education Recreation and Wellness Center LEED Gold, Sacramento State University</i> <i>Residential Conference Center and Faculty Club, University of California Los Angeles</i> <i>University Student Union, California State University San Marcos, Winning Competition</i> <i>University Center, Sonoma State University California</i> <i>Historic Landmark Renovation and Conversion, 140 New Montgomery San Francisco</i>
Various Internships During school	Bruce Tomb Architecture Designer, Rhinoceros Model for Resin Fabrication <i>Hibbs-Gray Residence Bath Pod Addition, San Francisco, featured in SF MOMA</i> Michael Tauber Architecture Designer, 3D Model, Graphics <i>Johnson Residence Design, Oakland, Published in Small Firms Great Projects</i> Phillip Banta & Associates Architecture Intern, 3D Model, Graphics
4.2004 - 8.2004	Camp Sweeny Juvenile Hall Cornerstone Foundation for Educational Advancement Instructor and Coordinator of 16-week Architectural Studio of 14-18yr old
Various other Leadership roles	Wolf House Co-Op, UC Berkeley Served as House, Kitchen & Workshift Manager Team Captain of Architects, Engineers, and Contractors (AEC) Softball League in SF Team Captain of San Leandro High School, Junior & Senior year AIA SF ARE Committee Member AIA Mentorship Program 2007-2013
Hobbies + Interests	Gardening, Tomatoes, Chickens, Tennis, Softball, Traveling, Wood Furniture, Hiking/Camping, Cooking, Drawing/sketching, Graphics, Painting, Photography, Sewing, Knitting, Crafts



DATE AND TIME RECEIVED



NOTE: THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED APPLICATION MUST BE FILED WITH THE ST. HELENA CITY CLERK BY
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026, AT 5:00 P.M.

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE ST. HELENA CITY COUNCIL

This application is to fill a vacancy on the St. Helena City Council. The St. Helena City Council will publicly-review all submitted applications where the applicants meet the qualifications. The Council will hold a public interview process for each candidate on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, and the appointment at the regular City Council meeting Tuesday, May 26, 2026. The applicant interviews will take place at Vintage Hall (465 Main Street, St. Helena). The term of office will be from May 26, 2026, through November 2026.

This application is a public document, although your personal information will be redacted. Your application will be compiled with other applications and considered by the St. Helena City Council as a part of a noticed public meeting.

Only St. Helena residents who are registered voters in St. Helena will be eligible for appointment.

Name: Bonnie Schoch

Residence Address: [REDACTED] St. Helena, CA 94574

Mailing Address (if different): _____

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Best Phone Number to Reach You: [REDACTED]

Are you currently a registered voter and a resident of the City of St. Helena, or will be at the time of an appointment? yes (yes or no)

- Please include your resume and answer the following questions on a separate sheet(s) of paper.

(continued on next page)

Bonnie Schoch

Contact

[REDACTED]
St. Helena, CA 94574
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Objective

With my past experience on the St. Helena City Council and my strong financial background I am applying for the current vacancy on the City Council. I believe I can hit the ground running to fill in immediately and help with budgets and the hiring of the new city manager.

Work Experience

1978 - 1998

Accounting Manager | Domaine Chandon Winery

1998 - 2024

Chief Financial Officer | Stag's Leap Wine Cellars
St. Supery Winery
Cuvaision Winery

City / County Experience

1996 -2003

St. Helena School Board

2003 - 2010

St. Helena City Council
Napa County Farm Worker Housing Committee

Volunteer Experience

Soroptomist – 20 years

Up Valley Family Center Board– 8 years, last 2 as president

Riana House Board – current, serving as Chairman

Our Town St. Helena Board – current

Strengths

I bring a solid financial background as well as a long term knowledge of the advantages and challenges that St. Helena faces.

Bonnie Schoch – Application for City Council

Answers to Questions

Reasons for Applying

1. Why do you want to be appointed to the Council

St. Helena is facing both short- and long-term challenges. With my background in finance and my understanding of the role of a City Council member, I believe I could immediately contribute to addressing the City's budgetary challenges and assist with the hiring of a new City Manager.

2. Service as a City Council Member easily could require 10 or more hours per week reviewing council agenda packets, responding to citizen communications, meeting with constituents, and attending various regional and local subcommittee meetings, and council meetings. How much time per week do you have to devote to City Council service?

I am currently retired, so dedicating 10 or more hours per week would not be a problem. Although I currently serve on two nonprofit boards, I would step down from Our Town St. Helena to avoid any potential conflicts and would remain only on the Rianda Board.

3. If appointed, do you plan on running for election in November 2026.

Yes. If appointed, I plan to run in November 2026 to retain the seat. I believe there are several important challenges where I can provide meaningful assistance, and many of those efforts will extend beyond November.

Experience, Qualifications, Education

4. What qualifications, life experiences, and educational background do you have that will enable you to make sound decisions in the best long-term interest of the community?

As noted in my resume, I have been a resident of St. Helena since 1978 and have been actively involved in the community in many different capacities. In addition, my long-term experience serving as CFO for several wineries has taught me the importance of listening, gathering all the facts, and making thoughtful, well-informed decisions. I also bring a strong background in budgeting and financial management, which I believe will be valuable in developing sound strategies and budgets for the City.

5. Please describe your community service and government participation in St. Helena or elsewhere.

I served eight years on the School Board and eight years on the City Council, in addition to many years of volunteer work throughout the community.

Issues, Priorities, Concerns

6. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City?

I believe the relationship between the Council and the community has been strained in recent years, partly as a result of issues involving the prior City Manager. One of our top priorities should be rebuilding trust and improving communication with the community, including seeking public feedback earlier in the decision-making process. I believe additional study sessions and town halls would be more effective than relying solely on three-minute public comments during meetings.

Other key priorities include strong financial management, housing affordability, and building a stronger relationship with the school district, as many of our goals could be addressed collaboratively.

7. If you were appointed to the Council, what would be your top three priorities?

- Hiring a City Manager who is responsive to both the community and the Council
- Improving communication and engagement with residents
- Identifying ways to support and bring back the middle class to our city

8. What strategies can be undertaken to address the City's fiscal challenges, improve the City's economic health, and maintain and enhance quality of life?

I believe the City needs a comprehensive strategy that integrates the needs of all departments rather than addressing issues individually. We should explore thoughtful ways to increase revenue without compromising quality of life. It is also important to involve the community in the process and communicate clearly about both the challenges and the proposed solutions.

Values, Vision, Approach

9. What vision do you have for the future of St. Helena

I would like to see a long-term strategy for St. Helena that revitalizes local businesses and helps bring back the middle class. I also believe the City needs a strong City Manager who is an effective leader, works collaboratively with the Council, and communicates openly with residents. We need a thoughtful plan that recognizes the needs of all citizens, from young families to seniors, and encourages greater community participation and engagement.

10. How would you resolve a situation where your personal philosophy may be considered at odds with the majority view regarding what is best for the City?

Like any governing board, the City Council works best when members come into meetings with an open mind. Council members may have opinions, but they should listen carefully to all perspectives before making a decision. If important questions arise during a meeting and cannot be fully answered, I believe decisions should be postponed until all relevant information is available. While I may have personal views on issues, decisions should ultimately be based on facts, and I will respect and support the decision reached by the majority of the Council.

Also, at the time of appointment (and annually as well as at the completion of your service), you will be required to complete and file a public Form 700 Statement with the California Fair Political Practices Commission. Form 700 filings allow the public to know of any potential conflicts of interest related to your public service. These conflicts can relate to employment, property ownership, loans and gifts, stock ownership, and more. You are also required to disclose certain financial interests of your spouse (if applicable).

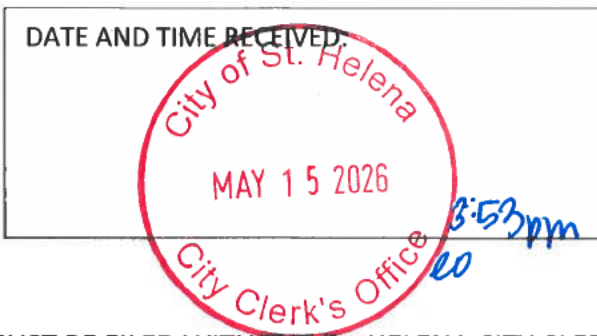
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I Bonnie K. Schoch (print name) swear/affirm that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature: Bonnie K Schoch Date: 5-18-26



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Only St. Helena residents who are registered voters in St. Helena will be eligible for appointment.

Name: Mark Smithers

Residence Address: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address (if different): same

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Best Phone Number to Reach You: [REDACTED]

Are you currently a registered voter and a resident of the City of St. Helena, or will be at the time of an appointment? Yes, 37 years. (yes or no)

- Please include your resume and answer the following questions on a separate sheet(s) of paper.
- The essential elements of a resume have been incorporated in the answers below.

Reasons for Applying

1. Why do you want to be appointed to the Council? **Giving back to our community is important and serving our community on City Council is the ultimate giving. I've developed many relationships within our community that I feel give me a good perspective that will benefit City management and City Council decision-making for the benefit of our community as we move forward in a positive manner. Our future is bright and I want to be part of that; being on City Council allows me to be more impactful while recognizing I'm only one member of a team.**
2. Service as a City Council Member easily could require 10 or more hours per week reviewing council agenda packets, responding to citizen communications, meeting with constituents, and attending various regional and local subcommittee meetings, and council meetings. How much time per week do you have to devote to City Council service? **I have at least 10 hours a week of time available to fulfill my commitment to city council, our city, and our community.**
3. If appointed, do you plan on running for election in November 2026? **It will somewhat depend on my experience on council over the next couple of months as the filing deadline ends in early August.**

Experience, Qualifications, Education

4. What qualifications, life experiences and educational background do you have that will enable you to make sound decisions in the best long-term interest of the community?
I have experienced large and small as well as corporate and family-owned organizations. I've lived in and seen many communities throughout California and the world. I've heard no and I've heard yes. I've been through organizational and system changes and implementations. These diverse experiences have allowed me the opportunity to listen to people and observe what works well and what doesn't. Through nearly 40 years of living in St Helena and helping raise two now grown men, my wife and I have made many friends and connected with many community members resulting in a broad understanding of the community's needs and desires. I have listed my education and work experience below.
 - **BS in Business majoring in both Accounting and Finance SFSU**
 - **California licensed Certified Public Accountant, retired**
 - **1981-1989, Senior Manager KPMG International San Francisco**
 - **1989-1994, CFO Joseph Phelps Vineyards**
 - **1995-2025, CFO, SrVP Finance, and Family Financial Advisor Trincherro Family Estates**

5. Please describe your community service and government participation in St. Helena or elsewhere.

Government participation

- Finance Committee 2025-present, past Chair
- Water and Wastewater Rate Study Advisory Committee 2022-2023
- SHAPE Committee 2017-2018, Chair
- Ad hoc Water and Wastewater Rate Review Committee

Community Service

- Board member and unpaid CFO, Roger Trincherro Family Foundation
- Napa RCD stream watch monitor
- NV Land Trust CE monitor
- St Helena Unified School District Bond Oversight Committee
- Boy Scout Troop One supporting parent
- Years of coaching NYSL
- Years of coaching St Helena Little League Baseball

Issues, Priorities, Concerns

6. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City?

- Long-term financial stability
- Public trust in our city government and city council
- Water quality concerns
- A well developed, efficient, and friendly government organization that has the capacity and ability to meet the community's needs

7. If you were appointed to the Council, what would be your top three priorities?

- Help to ensure we have the financial resources, staffing and organizational structure to meet the service level expectations of our community
- Help to expand transparency through more and timely information sharing to lessen the need for burdensome information requests and inquiries from our community resulting in staff having more time and less stress
- Be out and about in the community available to listen to and discuss with them, their ideas, their complaints, and share my thoughts, ideas, and thinking without being rigid

8. What strategies can be undertaken to address the City's fiscal challenges, improve the City's economic health, and maintain and enhance quality of life?
- **Fiscal challenges.** We should embrace the analysis and recommendations of the Finance Committee and develop a diverse and qualified committee (staff, city council, community) to work with the Efficiency and Transformation conclusions and recommendations in a manner that fits the City of St Helena. Encourage / implement "my buck" thinking for all staff and council.
 - **Economic health.** We should engage and encourage landlords to set rents appropriately that will encourage new businesses to fill open storefronts. Are there incentives we can develop? We should actively engage and partner with property owners to undertake community friendly development. We should strengthen our partnership with business and the chamber and learn about their successes, frustrations, difficulties, and plans.
 - **Quality of life.** Accelerate the replacement of city water lines and incentivize homeowners and businesses to replace their old, galvanized pipes by waving permit fees to help improve our drinking water. Improve underdeveloped parks (Wappo) and add centrally located easily accessible (10-minute walking standard) new parks in anticipation of new housing and growth as per the draft Parks Master Plan. Develop available city land for open space and community gathering locations using public-private partnerships. Continue implementing traffic calming measures to help alleviate the police department's need to patrol for speeding vehicles (engineering vs enforcement) and provide a more family-friendly and healthy road environment. Maintain the current level / pace of street improvements, repairs, and traffic calming measures.

Values, Vision, Approach

9. What vision do you have for the future of St. Helena? **We have a great opportunity to bring the community back together. I'm looking forward to many positive steps resulting in financial stability, efficient government, improved quality of engagement, and business development.**
10. How would you resolve a situation where your personal philosophy may be considered at odds with the majority view regarding what is best for the City? **This is not about me. This is about what is best for the city and our community. My personal philosophy will take a back seat to appropriately resolve any decisions. Decisions should be grounded in good governance.**

You may also provide any additional information or comments you feel would assist City Council in considering your application.

My children grew up here and now I have a granddaughter who likely will also grow up here. I have a real vested interest in this town I love and have lived in for 37 years with all the relationships we've developed. This is my motivation for wanting to serve on the city council.

Please note: At the time you would be named to the St. Helena City Council, you must be:

- **At least 18 years of age,**
- **A registered voter in St. Helena; and**
- **A resident residing within the City limits of St. Helena.**

You must maintain St. Helena residency and registered voter status throughout your term of office.

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I MARK SMITHERS (print name) swear/affirm that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature: Mark R Smith Date: May 15, 2026