

**SUSIE TJSSEM - 10/16/13 4:24 pm**

**1. In what neighborhood do you live and how long have you resided in the Vail community; are you a residential property and/or business owner and do you belong to any community or homeowner organizations? If so, which ones?**

I moved to Vail, for one winter, in 1974 and never left. I lived in various Vail Village, East Vail and West Vail condominiums during my early years in Vail. I have resided in the Buffehr Creek neighborhood since 1987 (26 years). My husband Brad and I raised our two children, Jenna now 26 and Bergen now 22, in our Buffehr Creek home. They attended Red Sandstone Elementary, Minturn Middle School and Battle Mountain High School. Jenna is in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year of C.U. Medical School and Bergen is a senior at D.U. My husband and I own residential properties in Vail and I currently belong to the Vail Valley Women's Business organization and served on the board of the Vail Chamber and Business Association.

**2. What are your qualifications and have you served on any committees or Boards of the Town of Vail or any other municipal or county government? If so, which ones? Are you or have you been a contracted service vendor to the Town of Vail? Explain.**

The experiences I have gained serving on the Vail Town Council the last 4 years would be hard to replicate. The majority of council decisions involve planning and zoning, capital projects or budgeting. I was elected four years ago, in part, because of my experience in planning and zoning as a Planning and Environmental Commission member (PEC) 2007-2009, my financial acumen developed as a large and small business operator, and my understanding of resort operations and guest service working with Vail Resorts and resorts across the country that were owned/managed by Booth Creek Ski Holdings. Extensive travel to European mountain resorts has allowed me to experience, first hand, how many of the environmental challenges Vail is now facing have been solved.

My Vail Town Council responsibilities extended way beyond our council work sessions and public meetings held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. I served the community as a member of the Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council (VLMDAC), which is responsible for marketing Vail in the summer, the Vail Recreation District, the Conference Center Fund Advisory committee, the ACE (Arts/Athletics, Culture and Event) Alternate Funding committee, the Guest Service Enhancement committee, and the Vail Way-Finding committee. One of the most time consuming but rewarding committees I worked on was the Vail 50th Anniversary Celebration committee. I am now putting the same time, energy and passion into the 2015 Alpine World Championships as Chairman of the Festivals Committee which is responsible for all the fun entertaining events beyond ski racing. Each of the committees mentioned is responsible for making important recommendations which help shape the future of Vail. Why am I qualified? I know the role, have a proven track record, will continue to do my homework, will remain open minded, will listen, will ask pertinent questions, and will make thoughtful well informed decisions. I want to be rehired to finish what I started. As the saying goes, when you need something done ask a busy person to do it.

**3. Are you for or against the development of a commercial event center or similar type of commercial facility at the Vail Golf Course Clubhouse building? Why?**

Vail is a resort town, first and foremost, that strives to balance the needs and desires of its guests, property owners and residents. The Golf Course has become a lightning rod for community discussions on how to balance individual property owners/neighborhood desires against the increased activity and commercialization pressures that success brings. There is an immense amount of support to remodel the Vail golf course clubhouse, to make it the crown jewel of VRD. A vastly improved facility will add cache to both the golf and the nordic operations. Disagreement revolves around the means to this end.

To justify the expense of this desperately needed remodel a banquet room was envisioned that could host mid-size gatherings (160 max) such as rehearsal dinners and weddings. The facility has, over the years, hosted private functions but now, because it is dated and in disrepair, this type of use has been very limited. Restaurants operators at the golf course have not been able to survive without the infusion of group business so there has been a revolving door of operators.

I am in favor of remodeling the clubhouse with an updated dining facility that will serve the golf/nordic community, the neighborhood and a limited number of private events. I believe a limited use can be compatible with the neighborhood and provide a unique dining experience. For the record, I was a member of the committee, chaired by Kent Logan, which sought ideas for how the \$10.4M Conference Center Fund could be used. The caveat was projects selected had to generate incremental new lodging revenues. The golf course clubhouse remodel and expansion project passed the initial “sniff test” because it was confirmed that public and private golf courses, with banquet rooms, peacefully co-exist in residential neighborhoods. The town council and voters endorsed this project as a legitimate use of Conference Center funds because the majority believed the remodeled space would bring incremental new destination wedding business to the town. I am still confident that an appropriate balance can be achieved through inclusive, sensitive, and thoughtful planning/design.

Being a good neighbor is important for all of Vail’s municipal recreational assets, which are enjoyed by community members and resort visitors. Bike paths, recreation trails, tennis courts, children’s playgrounds, soccer fields, and volleyball courts are scattered amongst Vails numerous neighborhoods. The majority of the time they have managed to peacefully coexist within neighborhoods even through they create traffic and noise when they play host to events and parties.

The decision, for or against the clubhouse upgrade, is now in the hands of the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. The court will determine whether or not a clubhouse, with a banquet room, is an allowed use under the protective covenants the Pulis family placed on the property before deeding it to the Town of Vail.

**4. Are you for or against maintaining the protective covenants that were established at the beginning of Vail? Why?**

The intent/purpose of protective covenants has served us well by providing a framework for master planning and ensuring the size and character of Vail is maintained.

Unfortunately a clear and concise method to change protective covenants, when there are unique circumstances or when uses have dramatically changed, has not been spelled out. Circumstances do change so there needs to be discussion of how to honor the intent of covenants while being realistic to the changing needs of a dynamic community.

**5. Were you for or against the Solaris project? Why?**

When Solaris was going through the Town of Vail approval process I was working for George Gillett's company, Booth Creek Ski Holdings, which at the time was redeveloping the base areas of Northstar and Telluride. I was well versed in the cost of redevelopment weighed against the upside of new square footage and increased property values. I agreed in concept that the height, mass, and density increases were a fair trade off for all public amenities the Solaris developer was required to provide i.e. public plaza, public parking, ice skating, bowling and a movie theater. The height and mass of Solaris is appropriate because of its location, adjacent to the Frontage Road and I-70. It would not have been appropriate if it were located at the base of the mountain or in the core of the village..

**6. What is your vision for the redevelopment of Vail Village, Lionshead and the West Vail Commercial Center?**

Vail Village and Lionshead are in danger of losing their vitality because the majority of commercial space is designed to attract the resort guests only. There are less and less commercial enterprises that appeal to the full time residents which makes the areas more and more dependent upon special events to drive traffic instead of relying on the every day comings and goings of community members. Vitality, energy, gathering spots and diverse retail and dining experiences that attract "locals" need to be programmed. To be successful, year round, the commercial cores of Vail Village and Lionshead need to be balanced with both community and resorts guest amenities and services. If the balance is skewing too far in one direction or the other the master plans may need to be adjusted. West Vail Commercial Center is the community retail/commercial center and should be redeveloped to serve the community members first and foremost.

**7. What steps or actions would you propose or favor to reduce pollution levels in Gore Creek that emanate from government owned property like highways, streets, parks, recreation facilities, open space and public parking lots? Should "no mow" zones be required on private property that fronts on Gore Creek and/or its tributaries?**

Environmental protection within the Town of Vail has finally risen to the top of the list of issues that the Town of Vail must address, now. Town of Vail has received a wake up call. Gore Creek has been listed as an endangered river and the recently released Burke Study confirms visitor impressions of Vail's environmental efforts are weak. Aspen is leaps and bounds ahead and gaining traction with visitor loyalty because of its strong stance on sustainability. Vail needs to put additional \$\$ and manpower toward solving the problems that have been identified. First and foremost the health of Gore Creek

between East Vail and the sewer treatment plant has to be addressed. The bug and trout count, signs of a healthy river, need to be restored to the same levels achieved below the sewer treatment plant. It will not be cheap and may require a new taxing district to help fund the effort which needs to include collection and treatment of highway and street run off before it is released into Gore Creek, checking 45 year old sewer pipes for leakage, and reduced use of pesticides and fertilizers. No mow zones and zero tolerance policy for all property owners, including Town of Vail, must be enacted. Getting out ahead of future problems should also be a priority. For example TOV should test the run-off from the type of artificial turf proposed for Ford Park for potential release of chemicals. If there are issues, address how to treat the run off before the project is completed. Encouraging recycling and reducing the use of plastic grocery bags are noble goals as well but the river health must be our highest priority.

**8. What steps or actions would you propose or favor to reduce highway noise from and congestion on Interstate 70 in the short-term and the long-term?**

My travels through Europe have shown me that these problems can be solved if there is political will. We don't have to reinvent the wheel we just need to borrow ideas that have been perfected in the Alps and Dolomites. Sound barriers and tunnels throughout the mountain corridors of Switzerland and Austria completely eliminate highway noise from spilling over into their quaint towns. Congestion caused by trucks has been eliminated through regulation. Unfortunately the Town of Vail does not have control over I-70 and can't require the Federal or State government to step in to fund or regulate noise and congestion. Vail's own political will is the only way to tackle these problems. A long term 2050 vision must be determined instead of looking ahead only 2-5 years. A 40-year property or use tax collected starting today is the only way to fund billion dollar improvements like tunnels, sound barriers, trenching, truck slow down lanes etc. If Vail wants to bury the highway that runs through it, it will need to start with a plan to generate the funds needed to pay for the improvements.

**9. Is the Town adequately prepared to respond to natural disasters such as wildfire, landslides and major flooding? If not, how would you improve the community's alert and response system?**

Prepared? Vail is one accident in Dow Junction or on Vail Pass away from a catastrophic number of casualties if a major natural disaster were to occur. The 2-lane escape routes on eastbound and westbound I-70 don't have the capacity to move a lot of people quickly as proven by the traffic jams at the end of a big ski day or after 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades. Vail is a narrow valley with a highway running through it. This may be an over dramatization of our risk since the highway will act as a fire break and major flooding beyond what has already been experienced after the biggest of big snowfall years is unlikely.

Vail's alert system will be immediately improved when the new cell tower is completed so reverse 911 can be received by cell phone users. An improved wi-fi signal will ensure all residents can be notified as long as they take on the responsibility of signing up for email/text/phone alerts. Installation of a siren/sound system throughout Vail Village and Lionshead commercial core, that can also be used to amplify music etc during special

events, can be used to notify resort guests that do not have access to our phone and text alert systems.

**10. In your opinion, have the business and life style expectations of commercial and residential interests become out of balance? If so, how should they be re-balanced?**

Town of Vail is dependent upon the taxes collected from its mountain recreation based economy (commercial interests) to pay its bills, provide high quality services and continue to improve its amenities and infrastructure. Property owners, residents and resort guests appetite for continuously improved services and higher quality amenities drives the need for increased commercialization. Free town-wide bus service, world class facilities like Gerald Ford Amphitheater, and recreational amenities all have big price tags. Standing still and accepting the premise, “it’s good enough” is not what got Vail through the Great Recession virtually unscathed. It is not the attitude that has generated a debt free town with \$69M in reserves.

Ideally Town of Vail’s commercial interests would appeal equally to residents and visitors. The Sunday Farmers Market and Art Show is a perfect example of how a diverse price point and product mix attracts both locals and visitors. Ensuring small businesses, which cater to residents, are not squeezed out by ever escalating rent should be a conversation.

Managing, even reducing, the activity levels in the commercial core have been suggested by some property owners in the village core who feel their lifestyles have been comprised by our success. I believe that residents who have chosen to live in or near the commercial cores or ski base areas should expect to have a higher level of commercialization, traffic, activity and noise that are a direct result of mountain resort vacation experiences.

**11. What approaches would you suggest that would bring balance in the participation between resident and non-resident property owners in the affairs of the Town of Vail?**

Technology is available to provide a much higher level of involvement and communication between non-resident property owners and Town of Vail. All publicly noticed meetings could be available live-stream. The infrastructure is already in place. By expanding the number of meetings that are available on-line more residents and non-residents would have the opportunity to become involved and Town of Vail would dramatically improve its transparency. Non-residents, who are interested in a specific topic, could watch the proceeding instead of relying on the condensed and sometimes skewed versions reported by newspapers, homeowners associations, property management companies, real estate brokers, or their ski instructors. Two way dialog between those watching from a far and those with the luxury of attending in person could be achieved by real time reporting of twitter and email comments. A TOV community relations liaison could also help improve communication and reduce mistrust.

**12. How would you increase tax receipts with and without hosting more and larger special events?**

Vail's sales and lodging taxes are the lowest of any mountain resort competitor. Increasing the dedicated lodging and sales tax by 1% is the simplest and most effective way to increase tax receipts without increasing activity levels. This modest tax increase would be collected mostly from visitors. The \$5M incremental new revenue generated by this small increase could be used to fund iconic and special events, cultural entities and summer marketing thus freeing up monies currently used from the General Fund and Reserves.

13. How would you proceed with removing more on-street loading & delivery traffic now that the loading & delivery terminal system has been completed in Vail Village?

Enforcement of existing regulations! Charge a toll for on-street loading and delivery in the village core.

14. What impacts do you foresee will result from the development of Ever Vail and the Summer Mountain expansion?

I foresee mostly positive impacts. Ever Vail will disperse the crowds accessing the Vail Mountain in the morning, thus reducing lift line waits in Lionshead, Vail Village and Golden Peak. The 400 public parking places will relieve the parking demand overflow currently displaced onto the South Frontage Road. In addition the 100+ hot beds will increase lodging sales tax collection. Summer Mountain activities will increase summer weekday overnight visits and increase the foot traffic moving through the commercial cores of Vail Village and Lionshead.

15. Please rank the following TOV issues in priority order: 1 highest, 15 lowest and bold/underline those items most important in each category. Elaborate with commentary, should you desire to do so.

#### RANKING

1. h) **Emphasize solutions responding to environmental issues, highway noise, Gore Creek pollution, voluntary and/or mandatory trash recycling**, charge a fee or ban plastic grocery bags, **impose more stringent energy and/or environmental conservation building codes**, terminate heating streets and/or driveways, **incentivize public and/or private investment in solar and/or wind and/or other alternative energy sources**.
2. b) Increase snow plowing and/or snow removal and/or **treatment of urban runoff** to reduce stream pollution.
3. n) Reduce motorized vehicular traffic and public safety conflicts on Town streets used for tourism by means of the Town of Vail providing alternative points and routes of vehicular access, i.e. **roundabouts** and **underpasses**, and/or **limiting vehicular access via traffic management methods** and/or aggressive enforcement.
4. d) Increase sidewalks/curbs & gutters, **recreational paths**, street paving, frontage road parking, building more public parking structures and **I-70 sound barriers**.

5. f) Fund more and/or larger special events summer and winter and/or **improve quality of existing events.**

6. j) Fund more public art and/or **protect more open space and/or parks from excessive use.**

7. g) Increase Town of Vail **tax revenues** and/or cut budgets and/or spend cash reserves to fund higher operating and/or capital improvement budgets

8. l) Leave the community's emergency helipad, used by the Vail Valley Medical Center, in its present location or move it adjacent to residences in an established residential neighborhood.

9. k) Increase Fire Department emphasis on reducing wildfire threat and **disaster preparedness.**

10. a) Incentivize the building of more commercial space, condominiums, **hotel rooms**, transient employee housing and/or **affordable full-time resident housing.**

11. o) Repeal or **modify** the Town of Vail **mandatory affordable housing requirements.**

12. i) Expand redevelopment through zoning and/or master plan incentives by increasing densities in mixed residential and commercial and/or residential neighborhoods.

13. m) Where would you allow Pot Shops to be located: Vail Village, Lionshead, West Vail Commercial Center, other specified locations and/or **ban altogether?**

14. e) Expand and/or change shuttle bus service frequency and/or routes serving residential neighborhoods and/or improve public safety in commercial areas.

15. c) Increase police presence with more car and/or foot patrols and/or traffic management and/or **increased enforcement** of nuisance amplified sound and/or late night noise and/or **highway noise.**