

**Robert “Red” Davis**

**City Council Candidate (Incumbent)**

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### **Candidate Introduction and Statement**

My name is Robert “Red” Davis. I’ve served the past four years on Morro Bay City Council. My wife, Gail, and I bought our house in Morro Bay in 1991 and we have lived here full time since 1996.

We moved here from Nevada City, California, after I retired from Caltrans and Gail retired from the Nevada City School District. Our children and grandchildren still live in Nevada City and Grass Valley. Our daughter and son-in-law are both Fire Captains.

I have a Bachelor’s degree in Human Resources Management. I worked 33 years at Caltrans as a Budget Analyst, Training Manager, Contract Compliance Officer and Planner.

During that same period, I was also a Senior NCO in the Air Force Reserve, serving as Training and Deployments Officer for 33 years before retiring in 1998.

I am proud of what we have accomplished in the past 4 years and what we are planning to do over the next 10 years. My passion is to help my city prosper and grow.

My vision of Morro Bay is that we are a small town that takes care of its citizens and welcomes visitors.

I value for Morro Bay its –

- Small town atmosphere
- Scenic surroundings
- Open space and parks
- Outdoor activities
- Small business owners
- Citizen volunteers
- Participative government

I want our city to provide a good living standard for the people who want to live here.

That includes –

- Affordable housing
- A variety of businesses and entertainment
- Small town atmosphere
- Scenic surroundings and open space
- Outdoor exercise opportunities



- An affordable getaway for visitors

**Question: Do you think our four economic centers (Downtown, Waterfront, Quintana, and North Morro Bay) are healthy and successful? If not, what three things are needed to improve business conditions in the city?**

I want to see business owners in each of the four economic centers come together and form interest groups. Tidelands Trust Lease owners are in process of forming such a group to facilitate their relationship with the City. Downtown used to have a Merchants Association. That passed away when business owners seemed to lose enthusiasm for working together for self-betterment.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan provides precise goals and timetables for establishing geographic identity and improvements. One of the first steps is placement of wayfinding signs. Community Development has designed the signs and identified locations. As soon as we are sure that we have sufficient funding, we will go out to bid for fabrication and installation.

Another aspect of the Plan is Ombudsman leadership to develop the plan. I strongly advocated for that position and Council approved funding last year for the Chamber to take on that role. Staff has worked closely with the Chamber CEO to implement all aspects of the Plan.

Another key component of the EDSP is review of the City's permitting process with the goal of helping to streamline issuance of permits. The Chamber is engaged in that process now with full cooperation of Planning staff.

I see Business Improvement Districts as the key to fully functioning economic centers. Business and property owners need to work together to improve storefronts, circulation, sidewalk vending and displays, banners, signs – make the districts attractive and vibrant.

The City has a role to play in permit facilitation and support, but I think business owners need to step up and take control of their environment.

**Question: If you received a \$1 Million dollar grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?**

I have often wished that I had \$1 million to donate to the City's Harbor Fund. It is apparent that the Harbor funding mechanism is broken. Tidelands Trust Lease revenues and user fees are not keeping up with what is required to operate, maintain, repair, and replace harbor facilities.

Current revenue is paying only for daily operations and minimal maintenance to keep the Harbor afloat. The best short-term and most reliable funding mechanism to meet this desperate need is a portion of the proposed sales tax initiative, providing additional general fund revenue that can help to pay for future Harbor sustainability.



We had to raise slip fees 50% this year because of maintenance that has been deferred for almost 30 years. That kind of sudden increase, \$100 a month, devastates our fishermen and ripples through the economy.

We have an immediate need to spend \$860,000 to replace slips at Beach Street, Dune Street, and the Launch Ramp. If we lose these slips, that will leave only limited space along the T piers for our fishing boats to tie up, at an even higher monthly rate.

In the longer run, we need to develop a Harbor Sustainability Plan, a timetable for revenue enhancement that meets the ongoing cost of operations, maintenance, and capital funding to replace major infrastructure.

Morro Bay's harbor is the center of our town, the feature that sets us apart from every other community in the county. It is the county's number one tourist destination after Hearst Castle. This is where Californians come to play, exercise, sight-see and enjoy our weather and our coastal beauty.

We are part of America's National Estuary Program. We have an obligation and a sacred responsibility to safeguard our beautiful harbor.

**Question: In seeking your position as an elected decision and policy maker in this 2020 election, what do you think are your shortcomings or lack of expertise and how do you intend to deal with them?**

Extemporaneous speaking challenges me. I compensate by thinking very carefully beforehand about what I want to say, and I write it down. Sometimes that comes across as somewhat stilted but it's how I'm able to say what I want to say.

**Please describe your business experience.**

I have owned and managed a dozen long-term rental properties over the years. I've learned about financing, insurance, maintenance, advertising, the legal system, tax strategies, court procedures and human relations.

As a City leader, I stand up for business. Small business owners are the heartbeat of our town. They are the bravest, most creative, and most generous people I know.

Before my election to Council, I was an Officer for the Chamber of Commerce. I took political office determined to represent the interests of small business owners on the Council.

I have participated in Business Walks with the Chamber CEO, monthly business forums, and Chamber workshops. I am Council liaison to the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), and I represent the City on the County Tourism Marketing District Advisory Committee. I am the City's alternate representative to the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC).



As a member of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen’s Organization, I support the fishing industry on Council. For instance, I insisted that Castle Wind negotiate an agreement with the fishermen before we allowed them to do business with the City on the wind farm.

I advocated for the Ombudsman position to execute the Economic Development Strategic Plan and I persuaded the rest of the Council to negotiate a contract with the Chamber for Erica Crawford to perform that function.

I worked with the Mayor and Staff to get Coastal Commission permission for our waterfront restaurants to set up outside dining during the COVID pandemic.

I am proud that I was a member of the Chamber’s hiring committee that interviewed and selected Erica Crawford to be Chamber CEO.

