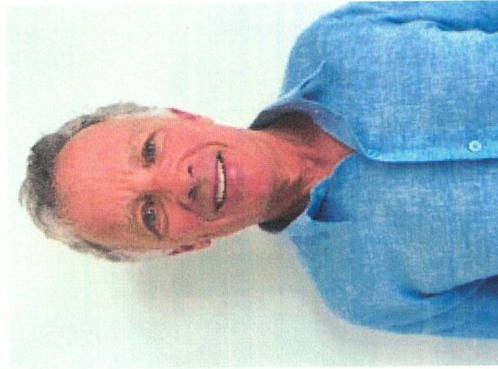


Residents deserve answers for July fourth riot.



ANDY GERKEN CANDIDATE FOR NEWPORT BEACH CITY COUNCIL,
DISTRICT 6.

BY ANDY GERKEN

The rampant criminal activity that occurred over the July fourth weekend demands a careful and serious review. Mayor Lauren Kleiman described the lead up to the civil unrest by saying “I was there and can honestly say it was the most calm and orderly summer holiday weekend we have seen in years”. Really? Perhaps a more accurate and insightful observation was provided by City Manager Seimone Jurjis in the Orange County Register when he said, “we are doing mental gymnastics to figure out exactly what is spurring the influx to Newport Beach, Is it the taunting of “Not in Newport” he said, referencing a recent campaign by Mayor Lauren Kleiman on the city’s Instagram account.”

Residents may not be aware that Mayor Kleiman used thousands of hotel tax dollars to produce a stylized video of herself depicted as Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, replete with ruby slippers. The video also included substantial use of official police body-cam and dash cam video of arrests. Our officers were shown saying; “Not in Newport,” The cost to script, shoot, edit and produce this video has not been disclosed. While it has since been removed, the video was posted on Kleiman’s campaign website used for political fundraising.

Presumably, the video which Kleiman showed in her community forums was designed to discourage disruptive behavior by holiday visitors. It clearly was not successful.

Rather than vanity videos, perhaps we should have invested in a police intern to monitor social media to be better forewarned about potential disruptions.

Our police officers did an outstanding job in responding to an out-of-control situation. But there are serious questions regarding the political leadership, which can best be described as posturing, in the lead up to July fourth.

We need an independent, afteraction analysis of what went wrong, including recommendations for better intelligence gathering and logistics for crowd control.

We need a complete disclosure of the cost to produce Kleiman's vanity video, including costs borne by our police department and Visit Newport using our hotel tax dollars.

We need to ensure that rather than overspending by as much as \$50 million to jam the police station/jail into Civic Center Park, we first fund police operations to be better prepared so that this does not happen again.

Finally, we should be grateful that the 400 rioters who were arrested and released on bail, ranging from \$50-\$500 dollars each, were not released into Civic Center Park and our Central Library as they would have been if the jail were in the park.

Dr. Andy Gerken is a candidate Newport Beach City Council, seeking to represent District 6.