Managing our finances. In Atascadero, we’ve set aside “rainy day” funds for many years and have been prudent with taxpayer money during the economic downturn. The City’s bond rating has risen the past two years and our financial statements continue to receive the best available opinion from our independent auditors. The City must continue to invest wisely in infrastructure and maintain a strong level of reserves. Understanding the importance of attracting and serving local businesses, Atascadero has streamlined its procedures and we must continue to strive to efficiently serve the needs of our business community and make it easier for new businesses to locate here.

Building community consensus. We have a diversity of strengths and experience that can accomplish most anything our community wants. Unfortunately there have been times in our past when divisions served to weaken our City rather than seeing our differences as complementary and becoming stronger. It is vital to Atascadero that we focus on achieving common goals through a civil process. Sometimes this process may feel frustratingly slow, but in the end everyone is heard and we can serve as an example to other communities on how to reach long-term consensus on important common goals.

Guarding our safety. As the son of one of Atascadero’s first firefighters, as a CDF summer firefighter in my youth and later as a civilian member of the SLO County Sheriff’s department, I have experienced the need for emergency services. Our City staff has secured grant and community funding for much-needed equipment such as fire engines and our Police K-9 unit. Our Council has made support of public safety a top priority.

Protecting our natural resources. Atascadero has one of the lowest cost water and wastewater treatment systems in the region. As a Governor-appointed member of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, I gained valuable experience to represent our City in protecting Atascadero’s water sub-basin and our wastewater treatment plan from unnecessary State oversight, saving our community millions of dollars in inspection and other fees.

Preserving our history. Our small-town character and historic roots make Atascadero a special place to live. Being a third-generation resident I see how Atascadero has grown, yet we’ve worked together to retain our quality of life for future generations. I am inspired by those who have made our community great, like former Boy Scout leader, Charles Paddock, who founded Atascadero’s now nationally accredited zoo. Personally, I’ve enjoyed restoring local buildings and the original Colony Holding Company Blacksmith Shop. As Mayor and Council Member I championed the restoration of Historic City Hall, when some argued to have it torn down to save money. We secured $30 million in grant, earthquake recovery and redevelopment funds so that no City general funds were used. Atascadero now has a building appraised at $200 million and has received State and National recognition for its restoration efforts. I remain dedicated to preserving Atascadero’s unique attributes and historic treasures.

Leading Atascadero into the future. In recent years the City has invested in our long-term vision of economic sustainability. Family-fun events and new businesses are bringing visitors into Atascadero and giving our residents more to do in their hometown. As a member and past Chair of the City’s Tourism Business Improvement District, I facilitated a complete redesign of our VisitAtascadero.com website and computer interface. This past year the City’s TOT (the “hotel tax” paid by visitors) has increased substantially, indicating our success. The City is working on future Internet connectivity, and working with the Economic Vitality Corporation and industry professionals to position ourselves for enhanced broadband infrastructure. The City is simplifying its zoning codes and preparing to work with investors to identify lots that can be used “as is” or redesigned to best fit their needs. We will continue outreach to attract businesses to Atascadero letting them know of the many favorable factors to locating here.

I would be honored to have your vote for Mayor on November 8th.

At your service, Tom

Three generations of O’Malleys at their family home and business, the Portola Inn.