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KNPR State of Nevada

KNPR's State of Nevada broadcast, titled "Clark County Responds to Mayor Comments and Concerns About Reopening" aired on April 28, 2020. This was a radio interview by KNPR's State of Nevada host, Joe Shoenmann, and guest Michael Naft, the Clark County Commissioner. This interview was on the topic of recent events between Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak and Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman.

Governor Sisolak has decided to keep the ordinance in place and maintain the shutdown of businesses in the state, despite Mayor Goodman's outcry. Mayor Goodman had recently appeared in a CNN interview where she publicly volunteered the City of Las Vegas to be used as a testbed for whether or not it is safe to reopen businesses following the shutdown caused in response to COVID-19. However, as we have learned in class, the Governor is the head of the local government, not the mayor, and the mayor does not have the power to reopen Las Vegas, despite her call to do so. During the interview, Mr. Shoenmann described Mayor Goodman's actions as having "offered up Las Vegas as a petri dish to test if the strip would get everyone sick" (Shoenmann). if it were to open ahead of schedule. Michael Naft mentions he began speaking up prior to that interview, because he feels Las Vegas is "too valuable as a brand to be playing games with" (KNPR). He likened Mayor Goodman's offering to a science experiment, going against Clark County's current efforts to keep Las Vegas safe and secure. Despite all of

this, both Shoenmann and Commissioner Naft mention that Mayor Goodman's position as Mayor of Las Vegas does not give her the jurisdiction to make the decision for resorts on the Las Vegas Strip, as the Las Vegas Strip is not actually a part of Las Vegas, but "unincorporated Clark County." Naft then continues to mention that Mayor Goodman has a position on the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority board, and that for her to make such a claim could damage Las Vegas's status as a popular tourist destination. Although Commissioner Naft feels that Mayor Goodman's heart may be in the right place, Las Vegas deserves a better "brand spokesperson" who can help to advertise Las Vegas to others internationally all the while maintaining safety of residents and tourists alike.

Moving on, Shoenmann had asked Commissioner Naft if he feels that the mayor's actions have increased tensions between Las Vegas and Clark County. Naft believes that the continuing relationship between Las Vegas and Clark County have not been impacted by Goodman's claims, and that the two groups understand each other well. Mr. Shoenmann then asks Mr. Naft if he believes that there may be any need for certain departments within the state's districts to merge, not unlike the Las Vegas and Clark County Police Departments had done around 50 years ago. Although Naft does not believe these circumstances to necessitate any mergers, he feels that the increased amount of people working from home has potentially helped to identify places within some departments that can be made more efficient, like email applications for the Comprehensive Planning Department. He then goes on to say that the 2008 Recession has helped to ensure that Clark County is better prepared to handle future crises that may occur. He intends to listen to and follow the guidance of the Governor, health officials, and state of Nevada at the state level and health districts. The Department of Economic

Development and Business Licensing Department had each held a presentation at a recent Board of County Commissioner's Meeting that outlined the framework for reopening Nevada, dubbed "The five F's, focused, friendly, fair, flexible, and fluid" (Shoenmann). He believes that business owners need to be fluid during the process, and we need to make sure we're looking through different ordinances and regulations.

Mr. Shoenmann asks the commissioner that, because some resorts have been taking Memorial Day Weekend reservations, if it is a possibility that the strip could be reopened by then in some aspects. Mr. Naft was "optimistic and hopeful" that some business could return to Southern Nevada. He had mentioned this date was specifically selected as the University Medical Center, or UMC, will have increased the amount of testing they will be able to do for residents of Nevada. Additionally, this could help increase generate tourist revenue for the coming summer months. Overall, Naft feels most people within his district have been responsible despite the difficulties presented and intends to do everything possible at the county level to act as a resource for businesses if need be.

References

Shoenmann, Joe. "Clark County Responds To Mayor Comments And Concerns About Reopening." *State of Nevada*, Nevada Public Radio, KNPR, 22 April 2020, <https://knpr.org/knpr/2020-04/clark-county-responds-mayor-comments-and-concerns-about-reopening>. Accessed 7 May 2020.