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Happy Holidays!

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New Lafayette mayor and vice mayor take the reins

By Lou Fancher



Photos courtesy Suzanne Iarla, City of Lafayette

Outgoing Mayor Carl Anduri is presented with a pen from new Mayor Gina Dawson at the Dec. 11 Lafayette City Council meeting.

Outgoing Lafayette mayor Carl Anduri's opening words at the Dec. 11 council meeting began with heavy levity, noting that it was the first opportunity in four years to hold the council transition meeting announcing the new mayor and vice mayor in person, due to the pandemic interruption and virtual ceremonies during intervening years. "So yes," said Anduri, in an obvious reference to the tragic events on January 6, 2021, following the 2020 presidential election, "this is the first peaceful transfer of power since 2019."

After blending light and heavy tones, a signature trait, Anduri said how it was a pleasure to serve as mayor during the past year, and thanked his wife, Sharon, for her support as well as fellow council members for being such collaborative colleagues. "I want to thank our city manager and all our city staff for all they have done for us during the

past year. And I want to acknowledge and thank the hundreds of volunteers who sit on the commissions, committees, and task forces; the volunteers at the chamber (Chamber of Commerce), the Library Foundation, the Lafayette Community Foundation, the Park Theater Trust, Lamorinda Village, L5, the homeowner associations, Lafayette Historical Society, and so many other community organizations that have contributed so much to our city. It is the volunteer spirit of this community that sets us apart. Working together, our city staff and our city volunteers accomplished quite a bit this past year."

Anduri noted the past year's accomplishments, including approval of the updated Housing Element for the General Plan, which was submitted it to the state prior to the January deadline. "During the year, staff, residents and the council have spent thou-

sands of hours working on the revised Housing Element update that is now out for public comment," he said. "As part of our celebration of 175-plus years, we installed seven Lafayette history themed utility box wraps along Mt. Diablo Boulevard. We also adopted our land acknowledgment statement and related protocols. We adopted and implemented the Safe Firearms Storage Ordinance. In April, we opened the First Street Rain Garden. Our creeks committee installed new signs along our creeks; we have 16 miles of creeks in Lafayette and the committee wants to make our residents more aware of them. We approved a \$1.5 million loan to Sunflower Hill to help finance construction of 38 residential units for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Anduri noted the successful second annual community day, as well as the partnership with Sustainable Contra Costa and the launch of the Lamorinda Sustainability Challenge. While Orinda won the challenge and Moraga came in second, Anduri said, "Wait till next year."

"The city's environmental task force set our recreational loaner program for residents to try out electric induction cooktops and electric leaf blowers," Anduri continued.

"On the recommendation of the environmental task force, the city council adopted an ordinance banning the use of gas-powered leaf blowers beginning July 1, 2024."

Anduri noted how a group of residents who are experts in their fields came together to help preserve the iconic Lafayette Reservoir tower. "That effort is still ongoing, but East Bay MUD has decided not to begin work in 2024."

"We approved and updated the Safety Element, with a General Plan. We installed street safety improvements around all schools. We adopted a new traffic calming program; updating the existing 20-year-old program. We approved a local road safety program as part of our commitment to Vision Zero," Anduri said.

"Each of these accomplishments involved some measure of change. We have been reminded by our celebration of our history that Lafayette has always been changing. We know that Lafayette will continue to change. We know it is up to all of us to work together to create the change that makes Lafayette an even better place to live. Thank you to each of you for doing just that during 2023."

Incoming mayor Gina Dawson acknowledged Anduri's leadership and his com-

mitment to serving as a council member while maintaining a busy professional and private life. "You set a high bar for mayorship," she said, referring to his record as "exemplary" and his contributions as notable and long-lasting.

After receiving the gift of an old-school fancy pen, Anduri moved to elect Dawson as mayor and Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok as vice mayor. Approved by council members, public comments honored Anduri and his term leading the council.

The first of the public speakers called attention to Anduri's care of and caring for the community, and his statesmanship. A second speaker and resident thanked him for his accomplishments and followed through and presented him with "a bottle of bubbly" to share with his wife, Sharon.

The vote to pass the mayoral gavel to Dawson was unanimous.

Four days after the Dec. 11 meeting, Council Member Teresa Gerringer announced that she will resign her position effective Jan. 23, 2024 due to family reasons. The city council will discuss next steps to fill her seat at the next regular city council meeting in January.

Trombonanza – Holiday Fun for Everyone

By Sharon K. Sobotta

More than a dozen trombone players from all ages and stages of life gathered in front of the iconic coffee shop – Papillon in La Fiesta Square – to spread holiday cheer through a parking lot concert for a few dozen

Lamorindans on Saturday, Dec. 9. The temperature was brisk but the sun shone brightly as an intergenerational crowd gathered to take in the music.

Eleven-year old Noah Koester and his dad, Anthony

Koester happened upon the concert when they were in the area to get haircuts. Noah, who plays the clarinet in a community band led by a former Lafayette Elementary School teacher, was really excited about the pop-up concert. "I think it's really interesting to have a band full of trombones. I'm having fun listening to them and I think they sound really good," Noah Koester said. "It's important for the community to come together to support events like this."

Victoria Reimers came from Orinda to be at the parking lot holiday concert with her 6-month-old and 2-year-old sons as well as her husband Time. "This is my son's very first time



Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

hearing and experiencing live music. I want my son to feel like he lives in a community," Reimers said about her 2-year-old as he bobbed up and down and smiled widely while taking

in the music. "I want him to look back on the place he grew up and remember it fondly and have an attachment to it. I think these kinds of events help with that."

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Traditional Service
7:00 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.

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