

Published January 6th, 2010

Meet Lafayette's New Mayor

By Cathy Tyson



Brandt Andersson Photo provided

way to go, "a chance to do something completely new and fun at age 40." He received his law degree from UC Berkeley in 1992, initially finding work at McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enerson. Since 1997, he's been working with his wife at Andersson & Andersson on land use, estate planning, probate and tax law.

Andersson sees several challenges for Lafayette during his term; needing more revenue to fix roads and increasing expenditures for police services contracted through the Sheriff's Department, he pledges to "look at the options available." Opportunities will also present themselves in the coming year; he hopes to make the most of them by planning ahead. For example the current draft of the Downtown Strategic Plan calls for enhancing creek corridors. Andersson wants to have a plan in place so that if a property turns over there will be guidelines to make the most of the opportunity.

"I'm incredibly impressed with the level of civil discourse - its makes serving easy. Even when you disagree, that's okay," said the new Mayor. He commented that it's not always easy sitting for what can be quite a lengthy meeting, "but the fellow who has waited until 10:30 to speak deserves our attention and to be heard."

On a personal note, Patricia and Brandt Andersson have two children, one in college and one attending Campolindo. Brandt is a member of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, where he sings in the choir. He has coached his kid's soccer teams for fifteen seasons. The Anderssons have lived in Lamorinda for 18 years.

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Not only is the new mayor of Lafayette a practicing attorney, former staff scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley Lab, but over the course of eight summers working in the family ice cream store - Brandt Andersson has mastered the art of the perfect swirl soft serve ice cream cone.

Having served on the City Council for a total of four years, Andersson was recently promoted from Vice Mayor to Mayor at the December 14 City Council meeting. In addition to his work on the Council he was a member of the Contra Costa Climate Change Task Force and the Environmental Strategy Committee and also Chair of the Public Safety Implementation Committee.

His first term on the City Council came about in an unusual way. A council member left in 2002, which opened up three possibilities to fill the seat - leave the seat open until the next election, hold a special election - which can be expensive and time consuming -- or have the four remaining members appoint someone. Andersson jokes, "I was appointed because I was cheaper than a special election."

Born and raised on Cape Cod, he stayed relatively close to home for college, obtaining his first two degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: a Master of Architecture as well as a Bachelor of Science in Art and Design. "The best offer I received right out of college was working for an architectural firm for free if my drawing got better." He eventually headed west after graduation and got a job with the Lawrence Berkeley Lab, at the Center for Building Science where he stayed for thirteen years rising through the ranks.

As the staff of his research group shrunk from thirteen down to three due to budget cuts, Andersson thought maybe law school was the