

Published December 30th. 2015

Home Grown Mayor for 2016

By Cathy Tyson



Mark Mitchell at a recent council meeting with daughter, Lauren Photo C. Tyson

over the years, spurred by the activities of his two kids, Lauren and Ryan, who are now both in college. One of his favorites was indoor floor hockey. "Amazingly fun," he says.

He and wife, Anne, are officially empty nesters. Lauren is attending George Washington University; Ryan attends San Diego State University.

Mitchell sees a number of challenges facing the city in the coming year, but one of them will not be the budget. At the last city council meeting of the year, the final municipal budget and workplan for fiscal year 2015-16 was presented, which highlighted a robust financial picture. Actual expenses came in \$1.2 million less than anticipated and revenue was \$1.3 million more than budgeted - the best of both worlds, due primarily to a healthy increase in property tax and sales tax revenue. Although the fiscal picture for the city is rosy, he plans to continue the ongoing theme of conservative budgeting.

One area that needs to be addressed is the downtown landscaping and lighting budget, which is running a deficit. Mitchell sees discussion and a funding decision on that in 2016.

When he is not busy at city council meetings, he can be found at his day job since 1982 in real estate and property management, or playing tennis and golf, weather permitting. Competitive ongoing bridge games are a focus of vacations with extended family members. He recently completed the Citizen's Police Academy in his spare time, which included many evening classes and a two-hour ride-along with an officer in a patrol car, and was impressed at the job the police department does.

He is looking forward to the results of several studies that will be completed this year: one biggie is

Mark Mitchell, brand new mayor for 2016, brings special meaning to the phrase "local son." His parents came to Lafayette in 1957 when he was just a few months old, "an outstanding move," said Mitchell at his swearing in on Dec. 14. He attended Springhill Elementary School, Stanley Middle School and Acalanes High School. Then he left town - heading all the way to UC Berkeley for college, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration.

Mitchell takes the gavel from outgoing mayor Brandt Andersson, who resumes his duties as council member. Mike Anderson will serve as vice mayor in 2016. Residents don't vote for the mayor. Instead, the five sitting council members elect the mayor.

Although elected to the city council in 2012, this isn't Mitchell's first civic stint. Prior to that, he served on the Planning Commission for many years, reviewing projects around the city. He has also been active volunteering with Our Saviors Lutheran Church and has coached 11 sports teams

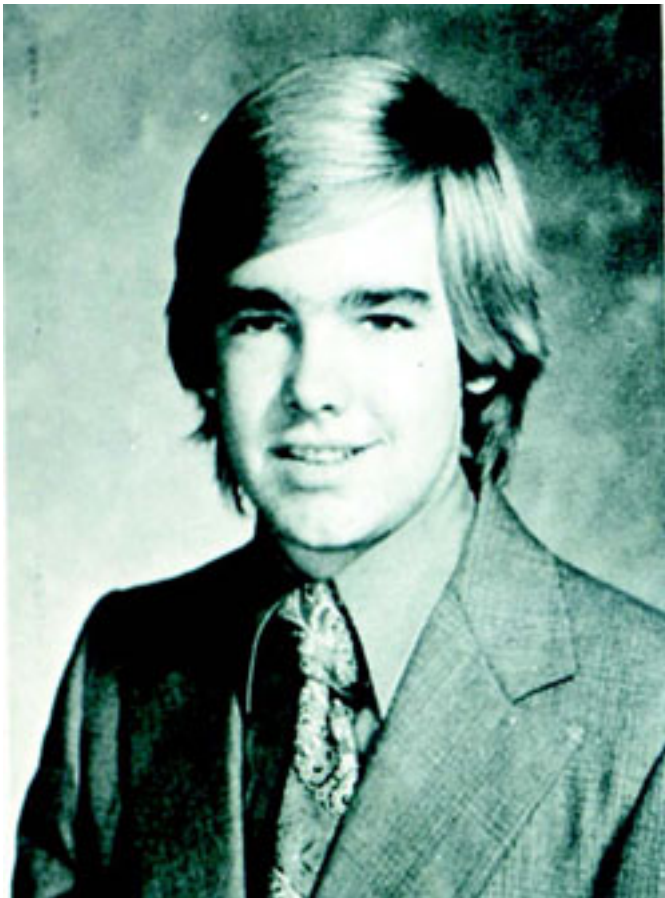
the downtown congestion study; along with a study to improve traffic flow on Pleasant Hill Road; a comprehensive parking strategy for downtown; a downtown creeks plan, and the sales tax revenue study, which is slated to give a recommendation on whether or not to consider a sales tax measure for 2016 in January or February.

Other challenges to address in the coming year include Community Choice Aggregation - what Mitchell calls "a pretty big deal." CCA would provide Lafayette residents with a choice in where their energy comes from, giving the option of cleaner, greener energy. The mayor wants to gather extensive community input on the topic.

Living in Lafayette his entire adult life, Mitchell brings a keen understanding of traffic, congestion, and semi-rural growing pains as the city continues to evolve from his days as a kid. Residents who want an up close look at local democracy are always welcome at city council meetings on the second and fourth Monday evenings every month, starting at 7 p.m. Jan. 11 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The agenda is not out yet, but is easily accessible via the city website, www.lovelafayette.org.

A Comment from Council Member Traci Reilly

Normally, the person serving as vice mayor rotates into the mayor position the following year. A working mother of three boys, Traci Reilly was elected to the Lafayette City Council in 2012, served as vice mayor in 2015, and was slated to become mayor in 2016. "I opted not to be mayor this year due to some additional commitments that would make it difficult for me to handle all the extra responsibilities that come along with the title of mayor. Due to the extra time required, I felt that it was in the best interest of the city and for myself, not to be over committed at this time," said Reilly.



Mark Mitchell graduated from Acalanes High School in 1975 Photo provided

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