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Tatzin not running for re-election

By Pippa Fisher

(Editor's Note: This article first appeared on the Lamorinda Weekly website on July 10)

After 33 years serving on the city council, Mayor Don Tatzin has announced that he will not be running for re-election after his term expires in November.

Tatzin made the announcement at the end of the July 9 city council meeting, noting that, by the end of his term, he will have served on the council for a third of a century, two-thirds of the city's existence as an incorporated community and for half of his life.

"My reasons for retiring are solely personal," said Tatzin, adding that he would like to spend more time with his wife. "I have been on the council for more than 90 percent of the years during which we have been married and being a council member is like having two families. I will need to have heart surgery within a few years and I am not sure for how long I will be out of commission or what my abilities will be when I return."

Tatzin said that he knows he will miss being involved with council decisions and city life but expressed his confidence that there are many qualified citizens who can be outstanding council members.

Those remaining so late into the night at the city meeting gave him a standing ovation, although the news was a surprise to most.

Lafayette resident and Circulation Commissioner Lynn Hiden was sad to hear the news the following morning.

"With his institutional memory, region-wide respect, his ability to negotiate, a killer logic, and his dedication, he was very good for us. Which had been his intent, all along," notes Hiden.

Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk describes Tatzin's accomplishments on behalf of the city as nothing short of monumental.

"Don has had a hand in every significant project that the city has completed over the last three decades," says Falk, explaining that list includes the development of the Lafayette Community Park and Buckeye Fields, the acquisition of Leigh Creekside Park, the deal to acquire the Acalanes Ridge Open Space, the rebuilding of Lafayette Plaza, the Veterans Memorial Building, and the new Lafayette Police Station.

"To my mind, Don's greatest accomplishment is probably his least well-known," says Falk. "He was the financial architect behind the \$50 million Lafayette Library and Learning Center; his plan not only helped pay for the Library but also endowed the Library Foundation with more than \$10 million, thus ensuring that the Library would not only be built, but also successful for generations."

Highlighting his moral leadership, Falk notes that, "During his 33 years on the city council, Don Tatzin has been an unwavering champion for transparency, for public participation, for people with disabilities, and for fiscal responsibility. By making these his priorities, he set an example for other council members and for all of the many staff members who worked for the city during Don's tenure.

"The city and its residents are far better off because Don Tatzin chose to devote more than half of his life to public service," reflects Falk.

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