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Longtime Lafayette city manager resigns

By Nick Marnell

In a stunning statement at the Sept. 24 Lafayette City Council meeting, City Manager Steve Falk announced that he will depart at the end of the year.



City Manager Steve Falk reads his resignation letter at the Sept. 24 city council meeting. Photo provided

"This afternoon, I have sent a letter to the city council with my resignation," Falk told the Community Hall audience. "It has been the great privilege of my professional career to serve Lafayette for 28 years, and I am proud of our many accomplishments on behalf of this splendid city. Our residents are engaged; the city council is a model of civility; and the professional staff is brilliant in every way."

to a new city manager. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve this extraordinary community for so many years. I will always Love Lafayette!"

An emotional Falk stopped to regroup for a few seconds before he continued. "The time has come, however, for Lafayette to hear a new voice from the city manager's office and for me to discover my unexplored potential. I hereby resign the position of Lafayette City Manager, effective at the New Year. In the meantime, I will assist the organization in every way as it makes the transition

In his letter to the council, Falk elaborated on his reasons for resigning.

"All cities - even small ones - have a responsibility to address the most significant challenges of our time: climate change, income inequality, and housing affordability. I believe that adding multifamily housing at the BART station is the best way for Lafayette to do its part, and it has therefore become increasingly difficult for me to support, advocate for, or implement policies that would thwart transit density. My conscience won't allow it.

"Meanwhile, in recent years, I helped craft proposals to make Lafayette the very best version of itself. One effort was Measure C, which would have acquired at-risk wild spaces, doubled police patrols, created a downtown park, added new public parking, and restored the historic Park Theater. Another was Measure L, which would have reasonably allowed middle-income development along Deer Hill Road while delivering significant new recreation facilities to the community and avoiding expensive litigation. Local voters rejected both of those measures by wide margins.

"Elections have consequences, and one is that Lafayette residents deserve a city manager who is better aligned with their priorities," Falk wrote.

The city plans to hold a retirement party Nov. 27 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center for Falk and other retiring city officials. As of late September, the city had not decided on a process for recruiting and hiring Falk's successor.

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