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## City moves closer to codifying procedure to fill vacancies on council

By Pippa Fisher



From left: Council Member Susan Candell, Vice Mayor Mike Anderson, Mayor Cam Burks and Council Member Teresa Gerringer debate the filling of a vacant seat on the council in January this year ahead of their appointment of Steven Bliss. Photo Pippa Fisher

following previous precedents, or whether they should take the election results into consideration and simply appoint the runner up.

Council members Teresa Gerringer and Steven Bliss and Vice Mayor Mike Anderson together with Mayor Cam Burks all agreed on the need to get a policy in place and to "get it done before we're in crisis mode," as Burks said.

"The residents of Lafayette elected us to make extraordinary decisions - from millions of dollars in financial commitments to community-based value policies that will impact the city for generations to come," said Burks. "This is our job and the public has certainly made it clear that they wanted a policy - as quickly as possible - to address this specific scenario, so we are not faced again with a situation where we are interpreting past `practices' or `traditions' in the middle of what could certainly be considered a crisis."

Burks says he agrees with the public on this. "I believe the staff's proposed resolution is fair, transparent, and, as we heard from staff research, a model that is used consistently and functionally by multiple jurisdictions in the area and around our state."

Council Member Susan Candell did not think it appropriate for this same council to codify the process, however, saying that she considers the decision not to appoint the candidate who came third in the election as going against the electorate.

Anderson raised the issue of adding language to the resolution to specify whether or not an appointed council member would be able to run as an incumbent at the end of his or her term - something that Subramanian said would not be enforceable.

The five members agreed to continue the discussion to the March 25 meeting to give council members time to consult further with the city attorney about wording.

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