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DANA GREEN

Srivatsa takes the driver's seat at city offices



Photo Jeff Heyman, city of Lafayette

Niroop Srivatsa (third from left) becomes Lafayette city manager at the Aug. 12 city council meeting.

By Pippa Fisher

The Lafayette City Council voted Aug. 12 to award a three-year city manager contract to Niroop Srivatsa who has been serving as interim city manager since

January.

The community hall was packed with members of the public who had stayed through the entire meeting to support the decision, many bringing flowers to present to Srivatsa who was clearly moved by the

outpouring of support, underscored by a standing ovation.

Following former City Manager Steven Falk's resignation from the position at the end of 2018, Srivatsa took over the helm as interim

city manager while the council searched for a replacement with the help of recruitment consultants, Avery and Associates, who conducted a nationwide search resulting in 35 candidates. The finalists were interviewed by a community and staff panel as well as by the council.

Mayor Mike Anderson likened Srivatsa's interim period to a boot camp experience, saying that through all the challenges (referring to an unforeseen change of mayor, responses to legislative issues and the hiring of a lobbyist) she remained solid.

"She has clearly demonstrated over her long tenure with the city a firm commitment and ability to maintain the values of our very special community," said Anderson in an earlier statement. "As we head into a

tumultuous cycle of state legislation determined to limit our local control over planning and development, and begin the update of our general plan, Ms. Srivatsa's knowledge and experience will be essential to our success."

Srivatsa thanked her family and many members of the community and pledged to serve with honesty and integrity, and to always "love Lafayette."

"Forty years ago to this month I arrived in this country with one suitcase and a truckload of dreams," said Srivatsa, who is known affectionately to city staff as a "steel lotus" – a reference to the national flower of India that signifies peace, purity and harmony from its ability to root in mud and yet push through the murky waters to bloom.

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Lady Gaga's foundation to promote kindness in Lafayette



Photo Jeff Heyman, city of Lafayette

The city council declares Sept. 1-21 as "BeKind 21" in Lafayette to encourage daily acts of kindness.

By Pippa Fisher

The Aug. 12 city council meeting got off to a positive start with Mayor Mike Anderson issuing a proclamation on behalf of the city that Sept. 1-21 be designated as "BeKind 21" days in Lafayette, as part of the Born This Way Foundation's campaign. Schools, organizations, workplaces and communities are invited to make kindness a habit by performing an act of kindness daily for 21 days, culminating on the U.N. International Day of Peace.

The Born This Way Foundation was founded in 2012 and is headed by Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Germanotta, with the goal of creating a kinder and braver world. The foundation's executive director, Lafayette resident Maya Enista Smith, said that they are trying to encourage not just "transactional kindness." She explained that, based on the science of doing anything 21 days in a row it becomes a habit, at Springhill Elementary School they created a calendar for teachers, parents and students to do something kind every day.

Leslie Noel of Lafayette's Peter Pan Foundation told the council that many children are suffering from anxiety and want badly for kindness to be "cool." She said everyone needs the BeKind21 movement. "We all want to feel we belong."

According to a survey commissioned by Born This Way Foundation, young

people who describe their environments as kind are also more likely to be mentally healthy. Performing acts of kindness has also been shown to boost reported levels of happiness, self-worth, and calmness while decreasing symptoms of depression.

The 2018 campaign engaged more than 440,000 people and prompted more than eight million acts of kindness across the country and around the world.





"I am excited that the city of Lafayette has joined the BeKind21 challenge, and encourage residents of all ages to join this exciting city-schools partnership. One act of kindness can make a difference," said Council Member Teresa Gerringer, who coordinated the effort at the city.

"Thank you to Maya Smith, Lafayette resident and the executive director of the Born This Way Foundation, and Danielle Gallagher, past president of Lafayette's Springhill Parent Faculty Club, for leading the charge on creating a culture of kindness in Lafayette," Gerringer said, adding, "I encourage everyone to take the BeKind21 challenge. Our community and each of us will be better for it."

Smith said that they are launching the campaign with more than 80 "super-impressive" partners such as Starbucks and other corporations. "But the one (partner) I care most about is this community and the people in this room, so thank you so much," she said.


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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council
Monday, Sept. 9, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings
Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Sept. 4, 7 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Planning Commission
Monday, Sept. 3, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review
Monday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Lafayette School District
TBA
Regular Board Meeting
District Office Board Room
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us