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Day of Hope and Healing

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette City Council participated in a county-wide tribute honoring those who have lost their lives to COVID-19 on the one-year anniversary of the first death from the virus in the county at its March 22 meeting, reflecting on the milestone with a moment of silence.

Mayor Susan Candell noted that as of that morning 734 county residents had died of COVID-19, and there had been 64,642 confirmed cases in the county. Within Lafayette, as of that morning, there had been four deaths and 573 confirmed cases. Candell recalled that former Mayor Mike Anderson had declared a local emergency due to the virus on March 15.

Anderson said that he would not have realized the potential for the situation to become so serious but for talking to Council Member Cam Burks who, he said, "brought the fire to the conversation." Describing Burks as the "essential piece," he said he and City Manager Niroop Srivatsa gained perspective, acting swiftly to declare a local emergency. And he credited former Council Member Steven Bliss who was consistently concerned for those suffering, closing each city council meeting by acknowledging those lives lost and impacted by the virus.

Anderson also credited city staff for a "wonderful approach to keep the city alive," along with Srivatsa's work to employ Townsend Associates to provide help to small businesses. "It was a well coordinated, positive effort in a circumstance of great, great concern."

Candell also expressed her gratitude to city staff and extended that message to all grocery stores, businesses and restaurants, and said she is looking forward to reopening.

Candell said that in good news, the tier metrics are all going down. "More than 500,000 doses have been issued county-wide with 17,000 doses given in Lafayette alone," she said. She urged everyone to get vaccinated.

And with that the council observed a moment's silence.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

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