



Published July 21st, 2021

City discusses replacement procedures for council opening

By Lou Fancher

City Manager Niroop Srivatsa at the July 12 city council meeting outlined the process for filling the open position made available after council member Cam Burks announced his resignation on June 28. Burks served on the council from 2016 to 2021. His departure became effective the following day, June 29; his replacement would serve only until the November 2022 election cycle.

Srivatsa explained that the process and staff recommendations to appoint a person to fill the position are governed by Government Code section 36512(b), Lafayette Municipal Code section 2-1701, and the Lafayette Resolution that was adopted in 2019. Collectively, the two codes and resolution determine the vacancy must be filled within 60 days and a person appointed by council holds office until the next regularly scheduled municipal election. The city council's next such an election occurs Nov. 8, 2022, and includes three seats, one available for a two-year term, two others are positions held for four-year terms.

Policies adopted by the council in prior years determine that the council announces the vacancy and directs the city clerk to advertise the position for a period of time not to exceed two weeks. Staff recommended the council begin advertising July 13 and close the window for adverts July 30. Interviews for invited candidates would be held on Aug. 19 and 24. A resolution appointing one candidate must be completed by Aug. 30 to meet the 60-day deadline.

Additionally, Burks sat on two sub-committees: the legislation committee and the public safety committee. Swift action to fill those positions due to upcoming considerations and reviews regarding spending/city budgets and recommendations received by the council relating to public safety had staff recommending the council vote immediately to appoint new members to the vacancies.

In later action, Vice Mayor Theresa Gerringer was unanimously appointed to the legislation committee and Council Member Gina Dawson was nominated and appointed by unanimous vote to the public safety committee.

After directing several questions to Srivatsa, Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson, and legal advisor Scott Smith, the process was summarized and steps outlined: announce the vacancy; advertise for a two week period; accept applications now through Aug. 12; council to draft interview questions in preparation for a July 26 city council open session discussion of the proposed questions; schedule and conduct interviews with invited candidates on Aug. 19 and 24; and on Aug. 30, adopt the resolution to fill the vacancy with the selected candidate.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

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