

COMMUNITY NEWS

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New Legal Expert to Guide San Mateo

City Council Appoints Prasanna Rasiah to Serve as New City Attorney

San Mateo, CA — After a competitive search for a new legal expert to guide San Mateo through challenges and opportunities, the City Council plans to appoint Prasanna Rasiah to serve as its next city attorney.

Rasiah, who has over two decades of municipal law experience with Bay Area cities, has been chosen to replace retiring City Attorney Shawn Mason. Rasiah will soon oversee the San Mateo City Attorney's Office and implement its mission of providing ethical legal guidance and zealous representation to the City Council, boards and commissions, city manager, various city departments and staff in their work to make San Mateo a community of the highest quality.

Rasiah has spent the last 4 years with Redwood City where he is currently the senior assistant city attorney and serves as acting city attorney in the absence of the city attorney. He has expertise in municipal land use law and is providing legal assistance in the agency's COVID-19 emergency response. Prior to working on the Peninsula, Rasiah sharpened his legal career during 11 years with the City of Fremont and almost 5 years with the City of Berkeley. He has worked on a variety of municipal issues including telecommunications law, health-related laws, campaign finance and elections law, environmental review, and conflicts of interest. His primary focus over the last 8 years has been in land use, including extensive work with General Plan and zoning code updates as well as development projects.



"San Mateo is a dynamic city in the midst of a multi-year General Plan update, major infrastructure improvement projects and providing high-quality services to the community," said Mayor Eric Rodriguez. "We need a thoughtful, strong legal expert and I'm thrilled we were able to recruit Prasanna Rasiah to join our team. His enthusiasm and experience will serve our community well during these evolving times."

Rasiah is expected to begin in May following Mason's retirement after 18 years with San Mateo. Rasiah will lead the City Attorney's Office with a budget of \$3.3 million, three assistant city attorneys and an executive assistant. He will be responsible for mitigating the City's legal risks, representing the organization in court proceedings, drafting legal documents, and providing legal advice to the City's elected and appointed officials. Aside from the city manager, Rasiah is the only other person hired directly by the City Council.

"I am very excited to join this innovative and dynamic organization. I have been very impressed by the leadership of the City Council, city manager and the executive team, and I look forward to assisting San Mateo as it faces a variety of challenges as well as opportunities," Rasiah said.

Rasiah earned his juris doctor from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1999, where he also worked as executive editor for the school's international and comparative law review. He also graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wesleyan University. He lives in San Carlos with his wife and two children.

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