



COMMUNITY NEWS RELEASE:
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San Mateo Selects New Mayor, Appoints Council Member

Amourence Lee Chosen as Mayor, Rich Hedges Named to Fill 2-Year Vacancy on Council

San Mateo, CA – The City of San Mateo has a new mayor and filled a vacant City Council seat with a long-time resident on Monday, Dec. 12 after hearing hours of public comment over the course of several meetings.

Amourence Lee was named mayor in a unanimous vote following the appointment of Rich Hedges to fill a 2-year vacant term on the five-member City Council. Lisa Diaz Nash was named Deputy Mayor and is joined by Council Members Adam Loraine and Robert Newsom who were all elected in November 2022 in the City's first-by district Council election. Lee, who is the City's first female Asian American mayor, was appointed to Council in 2019 and elected to a 4-year, at-large term in 2020.

"Looking across our City Hall, there is more love in this community than there are ideas that divide us and we're all committed to building that community that we want to be a part of," Lee said during the meeting. "It is a profound privilege to serve and we are so fortunate to be part of this team."

These important decisions come following hours of engaged public comment and Council deliberations over the last week. The Council met on Dec. 5 to swear in the three new elected representatives as outgoing council members left the dais, and began discussing the mayoral rotation. They were scheduled to reconvene on Dec. 12 to consider filling a council seat that was vacated due to former council member Diane Papan being elected to the State Assembly.

The voter approved City Charter calls for Council members to appoint a member to fill a vacancy and the Council guidelines outline a mayoral system whereby the Council members rotate annually amongst themselves as mayor. After deadlocking on the mayor appointment on Dec. 5, the Council reconvened on Dec. 7 to consider the mayor position before continuing the discussion again until after the Council heard from the eight applicants seeking to be appointed to the council.

Rich Hedges is a long-time resident with an array of service experience and passion for local government. He lives in the newly-created District 4 and has served on numerous city, county, regional and state boards. During the meeting he noted he looks forward to helping bridge the council and repair relationships in the community.

The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government, and City Manager Drew Corbett has continued to ensure the many services the community relies upon remain uninterrupted.

"There obviously has been a lot of public attention to this political matter and while it's been a distraction after the election, our dedicated city staff have remained steadfast in providing high-quality services to the entire community. It's time for all of us to come together in our shared mission of supporting the San Mateo community," Corbett said.

During the meeting Lee alleged she was previously contacted by unnamed individuals leading up to the council appointment in a way that may have violated the Brown Act and other state law, and after she declined to provide further details, the City Attorney's Office referred the matter to the District Attorney which is responsible for these types of investigations.

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