Wormhoudt stays Santa Cruz mayor

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11-29-89

SANTA CRUZ — Mardi Wormhoudt was unanimously elected mayor for a second consecutive term Tuesday by the City Council.

It marks the first time a city mayor has been elected to two consecutive terms in decades.

Jane Yokoyama, who as vice mayor for the past year would have been elected mayor under City Council tradition, nominated Wormhoudt.

"Continuity in the mayorship is vital in this critical period," Yokoyama said, citing Wormhoudt's "valuable congressional and governmental ties" since the earthquake.

Mayor/ Wormhoudt praised

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"She's shown a lot of commitment and guts," Yokoyama said.

Yokoyama was in turn nominated to continue as vice mayor and was unanimously elected. Councilman John Laird nominated Yokoyama, saying she had "made a great sacrifice" in stepping aside from the opportunity to be mayor.

Councilman Joe Ghio said no mayor has served two consecutive terms since the 1948 charter that created a city manager-style government for the city.

Ghio took the opportunity to call for the direct election of the mayor, calling the current practice of electing the mayor from within the council "an antiquated system."

Ghio promised to bring a referendum to city voters calling for a charter amendment next year.

"Once again the citizens of Santa Cruz are being denied their say on who is the mayor," Ghio said. "It's a travesty of democracy," he said.

Ghio said the mayor, particularly in situations such as the earthquake, must have the mandate of the voters.

The council praised Wormhoudt for her actions since the earthquake.

"We've had a round-the-clock mayor for the last five weeks," Laird said.

Councilman John Mahaney, responding to Yokoyama's call for teamwork, commented that for most of the year he had not "seen much teamwork or cooperation. None of my constituents have been appointed to commissions," Mahaney said. "Mardi has done a fantastic job in the last month," Mahaney said.

Mardi Wormhoudt