



Dave Brooks/Register-Pajaronian

Watsonville City Clerk Lorraine Washington (right) swears in re-elected Watsonville Mayor Judy Doering-Nielsen and re-elected Mayor Pro Tempore Ramon Gomez Tuesday night.

Watsonville mayor elected

mayors *R - P 11-26-03*

Council gives Doering-Nielsen/Gomez second terms

By DAVE BROOKS
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Get ready for one more year.

The Watsonville City Council handed Mayor Judy Doering-Nielsen and Mayor Pro-Tempore Ramon Gomez second terms during a close yet cordial meeting Tuesday night.

Council member Dale Skillicorn nominated Doering-Nielsen for the top spot with supporting votes coming from council members Richard de la Paz, Ramon Gomez and Doering-Nielsen.

Earlier this year, the council voted to remove de la Paz from his mayoral position stemming from his involvement in an altercation at the Villager Bar. Doering-Nielsen, who was mayor pro-tempore at the time, automatically became mayor.

"She filled my position when I failed the city and was removed from office," de la Paz said.

"She hasn't had the chance to fill her full term, and I think should be allowed to continue," de la Paz added.

Antonio Rivas nominated fellow council member Ana Ventura Phares for the mayor position, but failed to secure the required four votes of seven needed to win.

"I respect her very much," Rivas said. "I have learned that she is a woman of high ethical standards."

Council member Manuel Bersamin also supported Phares, and after she lost the mayoral bid, Bersamin nominated Phares for the

See MAYOR, page 2

MAYOR

From page 1

vice-mayor position. After a few council comments, Phares decided to pull her nomination.

"It's obvious to me that the votes just aren't there," she stochically told the audience.

Despite having served five years on council, Phares, who is the first Hispanic woman on the council, has never served as mayor. There has been some talk that there is an organized effort to keep her off.

"At this point, I would be proud

to be the first Latina not elected mayor," she said.

Gomez eventually won the mayor pro-tempore position in a 6-1 vote with Phares voting against.

Both Doering-Nielsen and Gomez were sworn into office by City Clerk Lorraine Washington. Doering-Nielsen said she planned to tackle river levee maintenance, housing issues, job promotion and improving her relationship with the individual council members.

"These are all things that we need to deal with in the coming year," she said.

Many members of the council expressed dissatisfaction with the

mayoral selection process. Bersamin said that it was a partisan vote that pitted one group against another. Phares said she was interested in possibly allowing the voters to choose the mayor.

Doering-Nielsen and Skillicorn also expressed support for the idea, but all contended that the price tag for a mayoral election, upwards of \$100,000, was too expensive for the city in light of the recent budget situation. Phares said the city will have to stick with the current system for now because it is the most fair.

"Democracy is like sausage," she advised. "It's ugly to make, but in the end, it tastes real good."