

New mayors take the reins in Santa Cruz, Capitola



MATHEWS
Wants to tackle
water, UCSC
growth issues



NORTON
Aims to settle
contract with
city police

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CAPITOLA — New mayors took the thrones in Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville on Tuesday.

Vice Mayor Cynthia Mathews took the helm in Santa Cruz, replacing Mike Rotkin. Antonio Rivas took over for Ana Ventura Phares in Watsonville.

In Capitola, the mayorship was passed from Bruce Arthur to Dennis Norton.

City councils regularly reorga-

nize themselves, appointing one of their members to the mayoral post, a job that carries ceremonial stature but no added legislative weight.

In Capitola, a town of 10,000, Norton's top priority is to bring the police department up to a full force.

"I like this position," Norton said, adding that he's looking forward to being the "great mediator."

"It's extra fun the last year," he said. Norton is starting his eighth, and last, year on the council,

Settling the Capitola Police Department contract is something Norton said he'll work on right away.

The city's officers' contract expired in June, and closed-session negotiations with the city have stalled, damaging employee morale, Capt. Todd Mayer said last week.

"I have never seen such contentiousness in the almost 30 years since I've been here," Mayer said. Norton, who served as Capitola

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mayor once before from November 2000 to November 2001, will outline his plan for resolving the police issue at the council's next regular meeting.

Norton, 59, is a land-use consultant and building designer and has lived in Capitola since 1978. He has three adult children, and he enjoys fishing.

He also promises to detail how he'd like to make the city more pedestrian-friendly by slowing traffic and easing the parking problem. He's in favor of adding a second level to the Pacific Cove parking lot behind City Hall.

He also said the city must find a buyer for the Capitola Theater property.

"The time is right," Norton said, to turn the structure on Monterey Avenue into a 40- to 60-room boutique hotel.

He's confident that the council will help him reach these goals.

Councilman Mike Termini will serve as the new vice mayor, filling the vacancy left by Norton.

Termini has served one year on the council and said he looks forward to getting the ball rolling on a free shuttle service that would run during the summer. The electric vehicle would stop at popular destinations including the beach, village and mall.

Also, he will push for more public art projects as well as making the city more technologically efficient, starting with City Hall.

"I love this job because I feel like I'm enough of a non-politi-

cian to just do the right thing and not worry about appearance," Termini said.

In Santa Cruz, local political veteran Rotkin stepped down Tuesday night as his one-year term expired. Mathews was elected to the mayor's seat in an unanimous vote by her council colleagues.

"I am honored to take over this responsibility," Mathews said. "I take it very seriously."

Mathews said the biggest issue for the city in the coming year are water, affordable housing, UCSC, Santa Cruz growth and traffic. Councilwoman Emily Reilly was elected to be vice mayor.

A ceremony for the outgoing Capitola mayor will take place at the next regular council meeting at 7 p.m. Dec. 8 at the council chamber in City Hall, 420 Capitola Ave.

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