

Easy Reader

& PENINSULA

NEWS, NEWSLETTER, PHOTOS

City Attorney Jenkins thanked for defending Hermosa Beach for one-quarter of its history

KEVIN CODY | NOVEMBER 30, 2022



Hermosa Beach City Attorney Michael Jenkins with a sign presented to him upon his retirement by Public Works Director Joe SanClemente

by Kevin Cody

Hermosa Beach's low profile, highly respected city attorney for one-quarter of the city's 115 year history, has resigned.

During a ceremony at Tuesday night's city council meeting, Michael Jenkins thanked by name all 19 of the council members he has represented since being retained by the city

in 1995. Jenkins said he will turn 70 next month, and wants more time for his five grandchildren, and for other pursuits.

Jenkins' successor is Hermosa Beach resident, and fellow Best, Best and Krieger attorney Patrick Donegan, who has advised city commissions for the past several years.



City attorney Mike Jenkins, and wife Christy share a private moment with (left to right) former Council Member George Schmeltzer, Parks and Rec commissioner Barbara Ellman, Council Member Justin Massey, Public Works Commissioner Kathy Dunbabin, former Public Works Commissioner Mike Flaherty, Council Member Mary Campbell, Mayor Mike Detoy, Council Members Stacey Armato, and Raymond Jackson, Public Works Commissioner David Grethen. Photo by Kevin Cody

Former councilmember Sam Edgerton was among the speakers who expressed their appreciation, and admiration for Jenkins.

“My biggest contribution to the city was hiring Mike Jenkins,” the three term council member said. At the time, Edgerton recalled, the city wanted to extricate itself from a contract with McPherson Oil, which would have allowed drilling in the city’s tidelands.

“We didn’t want to just panic and pay out millions. So we knew we needed a new legal team, someone smart enough to negotiate a settlement that wouldn’t bankrupt the city,” Edgerton said.

Mayor Mike Detoy said his first introduction to Jenkins was at a League of California Cities orientation for newly elected council members.

"When the speaker walked on stage, I thought, 'I've seen this guy before.' Then I realized it was our city attorney who was teaching newly elected council members from throughout the state the do's and don'ts of their new job," Detoy said.

Jenkins co-authored the League of California Cities' "Municipal Law Handbook."

Suja Lowenthal recalled a colleague's reaction to her accepting the Hermosa Beach city manager's position two years ago. "Lucky you. You get Mike Jenkins," my friend told me."

Lowenthal presented Jenkins, a runner who competed in the Tokyo Marathon, with a running jersey bearing the city's logo.

Public Works Director Joseph SanClemente presented Jenkins with a Hermosa Beach street sign that reads, "Hermosa Beach City Attorney 1995 to 2022."

Jenkins said he felt honored to have represented so many dedicated council members, and civic minded residents. He encouraged them to continue their civic involvement.

"Democracy depends on courageous leadership and resident participation," he said.

Jenkins also thanked past and present city staff members, among them former city manager Steve Burrell, with whom he worked 14 years, and with whom he climbed Mt. Whitney and white water rafted on the Kern river. Among the residents he thanked was cycling activist Julian Katz, with whom he biked.

Many of those who spoke mentioned encounters with Jenkins running on the Greenbelt, and The Strand, and at Valley Park, where he coaches AYSO.

Jenkins, a Manhattan Beach resident, promised to remain available to share his institutional knowledge.

"I don't think of this as a farewell. It's more of a 'See you around town,'" he said. **ER**