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Kough considers resignation, suggests ideas for successor

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Though he couldn't attend the Feb. 25 Roseville City Council meeting, Council Member Tom Kough's presence was certainly felt. Included in the meeting's agenda was a letter from Kough informing his council colleagues his doctors have told him to slow down his work pace and rest as much as possible. Accordingly, Kough, 76, wrote in the letter he might miss council meetings from time to time.

The letter goes on to state, "I anticipate I may need to resign in several months."

The full text of Kough's letter is available at www.tomkough.com.

In April 2007 Kough had surgery for glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

Kough was resting last week and couldn't speak with the Review. His wife Carol said her husband is concerned about who might replace him on the Council.

"He wants to help set up the process for an appointment," Carol said.

She noted Kough is still fairly active but they don't know what to expect with regard to his health.

"The cancer is back and they don't have a cure for this," Carol said. "His quality of life isn't very good."

Carol added Tom has decided to refuse further treatment because he wants to maintain as high a quality of life as possible and previous treatments were tough on him.

Suggestions floated

In his letter to the Council, Kough made two suggestions for finding his successor. The first was to amend city code to hold a special election if more than six months remain before the next election. Kough's term runs through January 2009; his seat will be up for election this November.

The second idea Kough forwarded was to name the highest vote-getter from the last Council election who was not elected. That person would be Karen Schaffer, who finished behind Council Member Dan Roe in the November 2006 election.

A letter from City Attorney Jay Squires notes, "The Council must under law diligently move to fill a vacancy and cannot simply elect to leave the seat vacant until the term expires."

Mayor Craig Klausing said the situation will require more Council discussion and research, though he said he's eager to include Kough in the discussion.

Klausing isn't sure that, legally, the Council can move forward until there's actually an opening.

"I don't know that we can pre-select someone for a potential opening," he said.

Council Member Amy Ihlan expressed a desire to see the Council work out a solution together.

"I'm really hopeful we can reach a consensus," Ihlan explained. "I'm hopeful we can do it in a way that honors Tom's service."

A document prepared by city staff estimated the cost of a special election at \$15,000. It also notes turnout for special elections is typically very low. The city last held a special election April 20, 2004, about three and a half months after a vacancy was declared.

The document explained it takes the city several weeks to get ready for a special election because the vacancy needs to be published and 30 days must be allowed for absentee voting. It also takes several weeks, according to the document, to recruit, schedule and train election judges.

Committed to service

Carol Kough noted her husband has occasionally discussed his successor since his original diagnosis, but with his cancer's return, those discussions have intensified.

Carol added she and her husband are very proud of the fact he's surpassed his doctor's expectations of his survival, which was originally put at two to six months.

"He's gone way beyond expectations," Carol said, adding her athletic husband - who has won numerous awards in senior-level diving competitions - seems to have once again "broken the record."

More than anything, Carol said, her husband will take things on a day-to-day basis, and will serve on the Council as long as he feels he's capable of doing the work.

"He's doesn't plan to resign unless he feels he's letting down the people," she said.

George Fairbanks can be reached at gfairbanks@lillienews.com or at 651-748-7813.

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