

New Mayor, Council seated

Story and photos by Jeanne Davant

Manitou's new mayor, Marc Snyder, pledged Tuesday night to work for a city where all voices are heard.

"I think our greatest responsibility is to ensure transparent, open government," Snyder said in inaugural remarks after he and new Council members Michael Gerbig, Ingrid Richter and Matt Carpenter were sworn in. Carpenter has been sitting on Council since he was elected in November but was officially re-sworn in Tuesday night.

Snyder said he was "extremely humbled" by the confidence voters showed in him, "but we have a mayor-council form of government. I consider Council to be a team."

Council has strong responsibilities "to our employees to provide the tools so they can do their jobs effectively;... to our businesses, especially to the downtown business core, to foster an environment where they can prosper;... to our residents to enhance their quality of life... and to our future citizens to provide a healthy, enduring Manitou," Snyder said. Those goals will be realized by creating new sources of revenue and sustainable practices to reduce costs.

"I think our greatest responsibility is to ensure transparent, open government," Snyder continued. "All citizens should have the opportunity for meaningful participation in the decisions we make. I am fully committed to making ours a government where they feel welcome and that their opinions are being taken to heart and taken seriously by the people up here. I really look forward to fostering an environment to come up with solutions that work for all of us."

Snyder recalled a former prominent Manitou citizen who inspired him to run for Council.

"All day I have been thinking about Kathy Verio, a wonderful Council person, who would often lead us in song and poetry," he said. Verio, who died last year, was "a tireless advocate for this town. I think back to her passion and commitment and hold that up as a model to strive for."

Outgoing Mayor Eric Drummond and Council members Donna Ford and Tony Jones bade farewell Tuesday night.

Drummond cited a list of accomplishments during his term including economic development projects, formation of the Parking Authority and Renewable Energy Task Force, urban renewal efforts for the east end of town, increasing Manitou's presence in the regional art community and the start of the largest public works project in Manitou's history.

"It was a lot of work to do that," he said. "You have to build a lot of partnerships."

Drummond thanked staff and citizens without whom those partnerships would not have been forged or projects accomplished. He especially lauded Finance Director and Acting City Administrator Mike Leslie—"my right hand. We could not have done what we've done without this man's hand at the till."

Wishing the new Mayor and Council well, Drummond said, "I still believe that this is a community that truly understands that the best way to predict the future is to help create it."

Ford, who retired due to term limitation, said she felt it had been an honor to serve on Council during a period in which Manitou has had three mayors.

"We have had a tremendous eight years," Ford said. "I have to applaud you for pulling together—the mayor, the employees and all the people who have worked so hard for Manitou. I have to say this is an exciting place to be because you get to truly watch how this country was formed and is formed."

Ford especially thanked former Mayor Marcy Morrison, who "taught me an awful lot about how grassroots politics really work," and former City Clerk Carol Lawson.

Council members said they would miss "Fordisms" such as the "doo-dah rule," which Ford often cited. "What you do to one, you have to do to the other," she would say.

Jones, who was appointed to Council in June after former Mayor Pro Tern Liz Feder resigned, thanked his fellow Council members for appointing him and "having the opportunity to be up here with you."

Jones brought a strong financial perspective to Council and often was a dissenting voice during recent budget discussions.

He vigorously opposed cutting funds for economic development, for example, in favor of funding an expansion of the Aquatics Center.

Drummond said he appreciated Jones' input and added, "I've never seen somebody grow into a position so quickly."

Also Tuesday, Councilwoman Aimee Cox was unanimously elected Mayor Pro Tem.

"The way she gets things done would make her a great Mayor Pro Tem," said Carpenter, who nominated Cox.

The new Council is again missing a member, who would fill the vacancy left by Snyder's move from his at-large Council seat into the Mayor's job. The city is taking applications for the at-large seat, as well as for City Clerk, through Jan. 20.

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