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Council pledges cooperation as Potter takes office

■ Richards named vice mayor;
Baron, Theis also sworn in

By MARY SCHLEY

IN A city hall packed to overflowing, Dave Potter took the oath of office as the city's new mayor Tuesday afternoon, promising to "fulfill the public's expectations" and make sure

"the door is always open."

Also being sworn into office, new councilman Jeff Baron said he will strive to ensure the public is heard, and reelected councilwoman Carrie Theis said she will continue working "to keep Carmel the special place that it is."

Before the new officials took their places, the outgoing council unanimously adopted a resolution ratifying the final results of the Nov. 6 election — in which turnout among the city's 2,566 registered voters exceeded 83 percent — confirming that Potter received 1,207 votes, Baron got 1,284, and Theis, 947.

Outgoing councilwoman Carolyn Hardy made the motion, and after the vote, she took a moment to thank outgoing Mayor Steve Dallas and the council for appointing her after he was elected mayor in 2016.

"We have accomplished so much in this short time, and I'm extremely proud of our many successes," she said.

Hardy said she appreciated everyone's support while she mourned her two brothers and husband this year.

"One of the most rewarding gifts of my term has been the many friends that I have made along the way," she said, adding that she will continue to find ways to serve. "I never stay idle for long, as I always like the challenge of a new project. I will see you around, and I wish you all good luck."

In his farewell, Dallas noted that regardless of the competitiveness that comes out during a political campaign, "in the



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

(Left to right) Council members Jeff Baron and Carrie Theis and Mayor Dave Potter take the oath of office Tuesday. The three were elected Nov. 6. Potter had mother-in-law Jean Boediker and sister-in-law Rita Christiansen join him with the family Bible.

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end, what matters is that the council and the community come together” for the benefit of everyone.

“There are a great many challenges that our village faces

which can only be resolved by all of us working together,” he continued. “There are also lots of opportunities to do some very creative things, which I hope the new council will also meet with the same enthusiasm and hard work as our council.”

Dallas said he was leaving office “with a great sense of accomplishment,” and recounted several of the council’s achievements.

“It has been an exceptional honor to serve this village where I grew up and one that I shall treasure for a lifetime,” he said.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Outgoing Mayor Steve Dallas shook hands with his successor, Dave Potter, who was sworn in to the city’s highest office Tuesday after beating Dallas in a landslide at the polls.

‘Ultimate volunteerism’

After city clerk Tom Graves administered the oath of office to Theis and the newcomers, Potter took his seat at the head of the dais and thanked Dallas and Hardy for their hard work.

“Participating in public process is the ultimate form of volunteerism,” he said. “When you come forward and say, ‘I want to serve as an elected official,’ in a community that’s as important as Carmel, you deserve a lot of credit.”

Potter said he plans to lead in a way that will resonate with the public, especially those who reached out to him directly to share their thoughts and concerns. “The message I heard was, ‘Let’s try to work together as a community, let’s respect the public process, and let’s all be allowed to participate,’” he said.

Potter, a political veteran but new to Carmel city government, told the audience that former U.S. Rep Sam Farr “wrote four

pages of what I was supposed to say today.”

But he said he would use just Farr’s closing comment. “This I promise,” Potter continued. “The city staff will work with the residents of Carmel-by-the-Sea through the direction of the mayor and council. We pledge to fulfill your expectations as public servants. The door is open, and please come in.”

Baron recounted the lessons he learned while going door to door during his campaign.

“Running for this office has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life,” he said. “I have in the past always believed that the correctness of my ideas was what mattered. What I discovered was that when it comes to representing the people, I was mistaken.”

He explained that above all else, people want to be heard and represented more than they care about being “right.” Baron said he met “hundreds of others who care as much about Carmel as I do, and are more informed than many of us here in this room give them credit for.”

The experience was “illuminating, because it gives me an

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incredible sense of the unharnessed power and energy of the public, and the respect that all of us here on the dais must have for them," he said. "And humbling, because there is so much more our government can do to harness that energy — to get all of you to help us make Carmel a better place."

Theis said she was "truly humbled" by those who voted for her. Working with Hardy and Dallas was a privilege, she said, and the council put a lot of effort into conducting the city's business.

"That being said, I very much respect the democratic process, and I plan on moving ahead with the current council, because I, too, want to get things done and accomplished," she said. Theis said she aims to protect what makes the city special. "That's really why we're up here," she said.

Councilwoman Jan Reimers, who was elected two years ago, said she hopes the community appreciates what the pre-

vious council accomplished.

"I look forward to continuing that service, because we're here for Carmel," she said. "We're here to hear what you have to say, to make the changes and adjustments that need to be made, and to move forward in a positive way."

New vice mayor

Councilman Bobby Richards, who often found himself at odds with Dallas and Hardy — and sometimes the rest of the council, too — acknowledged their strengths. "Steve, your passion and enthusiasm are incredible," he said, complimenting Dallas on his willingness to involve Carmel River School kids in local government in a way that they could bring about change. (They instigated the ban on plastic utensils and straws that is now law.)

"Carolyn, your willingness to dive into some of those tough subjects that we dove into, and your thoroughness, are admirable, and I very much appreciate all that you've done,"

he continued.

The only other item of business was Potter's appointment of mayor pro tempore, and he picked Richards, whom he described as "a respected member of the community."

"Bobby, you and I have known each other for a long time," he said. "I think we'll do a good job. I appreciate your standing in for me when I can't be here ... I'd be proud to have you as my vice mayor, if you're so inclined."

Richards replied that it "would be a great honor."

Potter thanked the council members for their words.

"The comments are reflective of the spirit of this council," he said. "That's what we can do together, is collaborate, communicate, and better understand the desires of the community, and avoid the confrontation and unnecessary conflicts in this community."

The new council's first opportunities to exercise that philosophy will be at a special meeting Dec. 3 and the regular meeting Dec. 4.