



This Week from the Mayor



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City Council President Don Persson presents Mayor Denis Law with a token of the council's appreciation at Monday's council meeting. The meeting was the last for both men who are retiring.

Presiding over my last city council meeting

WITH MIXED EMOTIONS, I presided over my [final city council meeting](#) on Monday night. I was sad because this would be the last time I would work with this exceptional group of councilmembers. In my 12 years as mayor I have been blessed to have a great working relationship with the council. We could disagree on items but it never became personal because we had a common goal: improve the quality of life for the people we serve.

I was sad as I looked out to see so many city staff in attendance. Our staff have also been unbelievable. They are so committed to serving the public and we regularly receive kudos from the public on their performance and rarely do we get complaints.

I was happy, though, when I thought about the tremendous qualities Armondo Pavone will bring to the mayor's office. Armondo is Renton born and raised and has owned restaurants in the downtown area for 35 years. When you combine his love of Renton with his business experience and six years as a councilmember, there is no one better qualified to lead this great city.

I was happy knowing that when Armondo's council seat is filled we will have three new members on the council. Monday's meeting was first for one of them, Valerie O'Halloran, while a second, Kim-Kháhn Vãn, will take her seat on Jan. 6. Valerie and Kim-Kháhn are committed members of the community and I know they will bring fresh ideas to the council.

Renton is very healthy right now and in the coming months you will hear about several exciting new projects coming to the city. I cannot wait to see what the future holds, albeit from a distance.



Incoming City Council President Ruth Pérez hugs retiring Council President Don Persson after presenting him with a photo book representative of his 20 year career on the council.

Don Persson retires after 53 years of service

MONDAY'S MEETING WAS THE FINAL one for City Council President [Don Persson](#), drawing the curtain on a 53-year career in public service. It will be hard to imagine a modern Renton without Don to serve as a conscience and mentor to all. In 33 years with the Renton Police Department and 20 more on council, Don has seen and heard almost everything and his commitment to community has set the standard for others.

Don was always the first to step up and fill a need. He was one of the founders of Renton River Days and has continued to work countless hours to ensure its success. He also helped launch Communities In Schools of Renton and REACH (Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches). And for the past 26 years Don has been the prime mover behind our annual Thanksgiving dinner for seniors at the senior center. Don is the epitome of someone who gives back to their community, something he does naturally.

At the meeting, Don was honored by his fellow councilmembers for his service. City staff and the community combined to produce a tribute video chronicling his years of service. A five-minute version was shown at the council meeting but I'm hearing the final version is closer to one hour. It's scheduled to be released next week on both Channel 21 in Renton and on the city's website.

Congratulations and many thanks my friend. My best to you and Vicky as you head off into the next chapter in the continuation of what has been a remarkable life.



Don and Vicky Persson.



Mayor Law and the new Mayor's Inclusion Task Force display on the seventh floor of City Hall.

Task force re-dedicates city hall to inclusion

LAST WEEK I MET FOR THE LAST TIME with members of the [Mayor's Inclusion Task Force](#). The work by these community leaders is one of the main reasons Renton has become a nationally-recognized leader in inclusion. They represent African Americans, Chinese, East African, East Indian, Filipino, Islamic, Japanese, Latino, LGBTQ, Sikhs, Somali, Sudanese, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Renton's senior population and have accomplished a great deal since I formed the group in 2015.

One of the first things we did after forming the task force was to dedicate one wall on the seventh floor of city hall to display their heritages. For years a large world map was on the wall, surrounded by shadow boxes containing artifacts from the native countries of some of our founding members.

Task force members surprised me during the meeting by replacing the world map with a display dedicated to the founding members. Now all visitors to the mayor's office will see first-hand the depth of our commitment to being an inclusive city with opportunities for all.



Mayor's Inclusion Task Force founding member Deacon Ted Rodriguez presents Mayor Law with a gift for his work with the task force.

Feedback

Comments, questions or suggestions, or just want to share all the great things that are happening in the city, please [email](#) me. Thanks for reading. [Translate](#) | [Archive](#)