



CITY OF DEL REY OAKS

650 CANYON DEL REY RD. • DEL REY OAKS, CALIFORNIA 93940
PHONE (831) 394-8511 • FAX (831) 394-6421

Good afternoon, Del Rey Oaks,

I am a retired military officer. The son of a mother who fled religious persecution in the Middle East. English is my second language. Discrimination of any kind is abhorrent. I have been proud to serve my country in uniform with all races and religions, and for the last five years as a leader in municipal government. I have been particularly proud during the past three years of serving the City of Del Rey Oaks. Improving the quality of life for our residents and businesses. Proud to serve ethical Council members, and work with Planning Commissioners and volunteers to understand the concerns and desires of our small town. Proud to work at the ground level of democratic government to improve the lives of those we serve. Challenging work, to be sure, but remarkably rewarding. We have improved our community in so many ways.

Yet, the shocking murder of George Floyd has crystalized for us how much work remains to be done as we work to form a more perfect union and combat institutional racism. In the past few weeks we have had many conversations, many while marching in demonstrations, voicing frustration, anguish and hope. While we cannot and should not look at the issues of race and justice without considering the broader context in the state, the country, and the world, we should be careful to evaluate our situation locally as residents and business owners of Del Rey Oaks. Our City, as is so often the case, is unique. While we can all improve, residents show kindness, respect and tolerance for one another. The pandemic has shown this in so many ways. We care for one another and our community is strong. As I look at our police officers I am struck by how far we have come. A core of tenured officers who have well and faithfully served the City for decades are complemented by newer faces, some young, some more experienced. All led by a Chief of Police who embodies the ethical and professional standards demanded in the Department. I see a Department that has improved training across the board, but particularly in how to de-escalate situations. A Department that inculcates a professional ethos in its officers to do the right thing, and does not tolerate those who do otherwise. I see a department marred by the horrible actions of a few far away. Finally, I see a Department, like all of us, that can and will strive to continue to improve.

Chief has written to the community from his heart. He and I have engaged residents in a conversation about policing that will continue. Sergeant Guzman has joined the Mayor during a fireside chat. A common theme from our residents who engage with Chief or Sergeant Guzman is that they appreciate learning about the profession and all the things our Department has done and continues to do to improve community policing.

A solemn commitment from your City team: There is no room for racism or discrimination of any kind in the City of Del Rey Oaks. Neither in our dealings with each other, nor with the public.

I urge you to learn more about your police department. Ask to go for a ride along. I learned so much in 4 hours on a Friday night riding with Sergeant Nyugen. Visit our new website where you can find police policy and training manuals. We will continue to hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards of public service. Kim, Karen, Ron, Chief and I were honored to participate in a vigil with residents to remember the senseless act of brutality that resulted in the death of George Floyd on Saturday. Our work to ensure that all are treated with dignity and respect will continue.

Please call or write me with your thoughts.

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In COVID-related news, the County Health Officer has endorsed the Governor's call to further open businesses and activities beginning June 12th while continuing to adhere to health safety standards. Please find the latest information on the City and County websites for more information.

Council held a special meeting Tuesday where they adopted a revised sign ordinance and voted to form a subcommittee to further review the ordinance going forward. Council also reviewed the annual General Plan Progress Report. There was excellent public and Council comment, which will be reflected in the version that will come before the Council on June 23rd for final consideration. The City received excellent news from Sacramento that our application for a \$65,000 planning grant has received initial approval. We expect final work soon on this planning grant.