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Sonoma's Development Services Director Wayne Wirick Set to Retire After 41 Years of Impactful Service

Sonoma, CA – Wayne Wirick, Development Services Director, and Building Official for the City of Sonoma (City), will retire at the close of 2023, marking the end of an exceptional career spanning over four decades with the City. The City Council will recognize Wayne Wirick's exemplary service at their final meeting of the year on Wednesday, December 20th, starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 177 First St. West and can be viewed on channel 27. Members of the public are warmly invited to join in celebrating his retirement.

Throughout his career, Wirick served in various key roles, including volunteer firefighter, Building Inspector, Interim Public Works Director, Acting City Manager, and, most recently, Development Services Director/Building Official. His remarkable journey with the City began in 1976 as a volunteer firefighter, eventually leading him to become a vital force in numerous capacities.

"My first paycheck from the City came in 1976 in the form of a stipend for responding to calls as a volunteer firefighter. Several years later, in March of 1982, I participated in an internship with City of Sonoma Building Inspector, Hal Hunter. Mr. Hunter passed away several months later, and then City Manager, Brock Arner asked if I would be interested in taking on the building inspector duties. I took the job and never looked back," Wirick quipped.

Among Wirick's many accomplishments, he served as a project manager on over 60 construction or improvement projects for City-owned facilities, contributing significantly to the enhancement of landmarks such as City Hall, the Carnegie Library, and the Youth Center building, the Al Mazza Fire Station, the Sonoma Police Station, the City Council Chambers and Emergency Operations Center, the Public Works Corporation Yard Office Building, the Sonoma Valley Regional Library, the Sonoma Veteran's Memorial Building, Sonoma Creek Senior Housing, the Haven Overnight Shelter, Village Green II Apartments, the Depot Museum, the Sonoma Community Center and the Valley of the Moon Boys and Girls Club. His commitment also extended to crucial initiatives like the award-winning Unreinforced Masonry Building program, which mandated seismic upgrades to protect historic structures and enhance public safety.

"I'm really proud of the fact that approximately 50 potentially dangerous buildings within the City, most of which are historic, have been structurally upgraded. This will help to save lives in the event of a major earthquake and hopefully will also help to preserve our most cherished historic structures," Wirick stated.

Over two-thirds of the building permits ever issued within the City of Sonoma have been issued during Wirick's tenure as the head of the City building department. He is a Past President of the Redwood Empire Chapter of

the International Conference of Building Officials and Past Chairman of the North Coast Builders Exchange Codes Advisory Committee.

City Manager David Guhin expressed his appreciation, stating, "Wayne's dedication, professionalism, and tireless commitment to the City have left an indelible mark. While he will be greatly missed, we hope he enjoys his well-earned retirement."

Wirick's impact extended beyond construction and development, as he played a pivotal role in the City's emergency preparedness and management activities. During the Nuns and Partrick fires in 2017, Wirick served as the Plans Section Chief and Assistant Director of Emergency Services, earning praise from Sonoma Valley Fire Chief Steve Akre for his invaluable contributions.

"He has been our rock in terms of emergency management. We're so much better prepared than we were in 2017. A lot of that has to do with Wayne's dedication and commitment," Chief Akre remarked.

In his role as the management information systems coordinator, Wirick implemented several technology projects, including the City's new cloud-based electronic permitting system. "The reason I became interested in technology solutions for the City was because back in 1984, when personal computers were beginning to become mainstream, I thought that they would be beneficial to the building department to track and manage building permits. It only took me 37 years to finally get the City up and running with an electronic permitting system," Wirick joked.

Reflecting on his remarkable tenure, Wirick expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside dedicated professionals and the vibrant Sonoma community. "It has been an honor and privilege to serve the many design professionals, contractors, and building owners within this community," Wirick stated. "I've been lucky enough to work in the middle of a park less than a mile from my home for over 41 years—how can it get any better than that."

Wayne Wirick, a Sonoma native, attended local schools, and resides in Sonoma with his wife Carol. They have three grown children, Matt, Danny, and Emily.

The City Council's recognition of Wayne Wirick's outstanding service will take place on Wednesday, December 20th, at 6:00 p.m. during their final meeting of the year. The public is encouraged to attend and celebrate this momentous occasion. For meeting details and to learn how to participate virtually, visit the City's website at www.sonomacity.org.

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