



City of Leavenworth

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City Council
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City Administrator - *Vacant*

May 15, 2020

Community Members,



I am very excited to introduce to the community our new City Administrator. Her name is Ana Cortez, and she will be joining our team here, and our community, on June 1st. Ana graduated from the University of California Berkeley with a BA in Latin American Studies in 1988. It was there that she met her future husband, Robert (Bob) Steiner, whose parents immigrated from Bavaria and who loved to visit our town, at least annually (gotta love them already). They have been married for 30 years and have two grown children. Gaby, who is a cancer immunotherapy scientist in San Francisco and is scheduled to start medical school there in the fall (up in the air with this pandemic). Son Robert is a journalist in New York City. From UC Berkeley, Ana went to study for a year as a Sloan Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. She finished her schooling at the University of Washington where she received her Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree in 1991. She is an avid Husky fan and religiously follows their football and volleyball teams. I had to tell her that this was going to be our biggest

challenge to overcome, as my wife graduated in nursing from WSU, and we have been faithful Coug supporters. Not sure what that compromise might look like. Along with her husband, Bob, she will be bringing Buddy the African Grey Parrot, Rico the retriever, and Bronx, a Yakima rescue dog.

She began her work career in the Bay Area of San Francisco, working for several agencies and communities in community development and finances, including the City of Richmond, CA. The last community she worked for in California was as the Public Works Business Manager in West Sacramento until 2017. In 2017 she came “home” to Washington when she was hired as the Assistant City Manager and Acting Finance Director for the City of Yakima. Her final work experience came from Helena, MT where she was hired as their City Manager and Chief Financial Officer in 2019. She had an unfortunate experience there, where she was caught in political changes that drastically shortened her time there. But Helena’s loss is our gain, as Ana brings a wealth of experience, a passion for community, and a commitment to excellence. I am looking forward to having her on board, and am certain that as the community gets to know her, the traits that drew me to make her my choice for City Administrator will be evident.

The one thing I feel badly about is that there was not an opportunity for the community to meet Ana before her selection. This is actually something I was hoping we would be able to do. We did all of our interviews by Zoom, which was new and not at all ideal, but were a result of the pandemic we have been caught up in. We had completed this process, and I delayed “pulling the trigger” on a selection, waiting for the travel ban to be lifted, and we could have a real face-to-face with our finalists. I even wrote in one of my early community emails that I could not see myself making that final decision without that face-to-face. This, despite the fact that Tony Piasecki, our recruiter with Prothman, said that Prothman’s experience has been that hires are being made based on these remote video interviews and that their company would not be available to arrange for any public meetings until the restrictions were lifted. As time continued its march onward, and it became evident that the nonessential travel ban would not be lifted soon, I did something I thought would never happen (not the first time I have said this during this crazy time), and I offered Ana the position without first getting her here to visit and for the community to meet her.

In retrospect, I could have, and should have, at least offered the community a chance to meet Ana via Zoom as well. That would have been easy to arrange and would have given more people a chance to be introduced before her hire. I apologize for that. But I would also like to offer a belated chance for anyone in the community who would like to “meet” Ana via Zoom to be able to do so. I am going to host a couple of Zoom meetings with Ana next week. These will be held on Monday, May 18th, at 7PM and again on Tuesday, May 19th, also at 7PM. If you would like this informal chance to meet Ana and learn more about her and hear her excitement to join us, just email me at cflorea@cityofleavenworth.com and I will send you the Zoom link. We will also plan to offer a chance to meet her face-to-face in an appropriately social distanced, mask wearing opportunity outdoors on Sunday, May 31st before she formally begins on Monday the 1st of June. (She has already begun informally to contact people and attend meetings). Join me in welcoming Ana to our community and its future post-pandemic! Stay safe!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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