

Silverton councilor suddenly steps down

After more than 11 years of service, Antonia Jenkins steps down midterm

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SILVERTON – Months before her third term expired this year, Silverton City Councilwoman Antonia Jenkins has resigned, leaving the council to choose a replacement to finish her term until the November election.

“It was just a privilege for me to be able to serve with [the other councilors],” Jenkins said. “I will certainly miss all my colleagues. I had a great time working on the council.”

Jenkins has lived in Silverton for 28 years and raised her two sons here. She worked on the city council for more than 11 years, participating in several aspects of the development of The Oregon Garden, advocating for local arts and aiding in the creation of several city ordinances.

“We’re obviously going to miss her,” said Silverton Mayor Ken Hector. “She was a wonderful councilor, a great contributor and brought a lot of balance to the council.”

“If there ever was a selfless person,” he continued, “it was Antonia, who was committed to the public and making the community a better place.”

In spite of her dedication and commitment, Jenkins decided to step down mid-term to pursue other interests.

“One of our sons lives in Nicaragua, and [my husband, Douglas, and I] traveled there this winter,” Jenkins said. “It whetted my taste for travel, and we hope to live out of the country. I want to become fluent in Spanish.”

“It’s the idea to be free to do that,” she said. “To pursue artwork and take a break. I would run for city councilor again, but after a break.”

Bill Cummins, currently a chair on the planning commission, will be appointed to finish Jenkins’ term at the June 26 Silverton City Council Meeting, according to Hector.

While Jenkins’ replacement will not be official until then, she is confident the board will choose a worthy person to take her place.

“My spot will be filled with a great person,” she said.

Her seat will be up for election in November when Cummins, who has ran for councilor in previous elections, will have the opportunity to seek a four-year term.

Cummins' prior experience will "bring immediate knowledge to the table, and help negate the learning curve," Hector said.

Jenkins originally decided to participate in the local government after her sons graduated from high school and left home. Giving back to the community was always something she planned to do, she said, because the community "was always really great to me as a parent, and we should return the favor for living in a great place."

After being elected by voters to the city council, Jenkins spent most of the next decade on boards and committees, aimed at bettering the community that she said was so very good to her. She was one of the councilors who pushed for the Gordon House to come to Silverton, and in keeping with her affinity for the arts, fought to keep the Silverton Art Association house standing in Coolidge-McClaine Park.

Jenkins promises she won't forget Silverton during her journeys.

"We'll return to Silverton," she said. "I will miss it."