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Peter Varney sworn in as interim city manager

Rocky Mount, N.C. – Peter Varney was sworn in as interim city manager on Monday after the City Council voted unanimously to appoint him to the post.

Varney, 73, will serve until July 22, 2022, or until the council appoints a new permanent city manager, whichever is sooner.

“It is an honor to lead the city and I appreciate very much the confidence that the City Council has expressed,” he said.

Varney graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in 1970, majoring in government. In 1974, he received a master’s degree in public administration from UNC-Chapel Hill. Varney served at the city of Rocky Mount from 1971-1976 as administrative assistant to the city manager. From 1977-2012 he was employed as an assistant city manager. The departments of Downtown Development, Engineering, Budget, Human Relations, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development and Public Works were under his supervision. Since his retirement, Varney has returned to the city three times, as interim assistant city manager (2018), interim Community and Business Development manager (2021), and now as interim city manager.

During his 41-year tenure with the city, the New Hampshire native spearheaded a number of key projects, such as total renovation of the Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station, Denton Street Pool and the Douglas Block restoration. Varney’s first project after venturing to the city in 1971 was the conversion of the Fannie Gorham School into the Rocky Mount Judicial Center. One of his most difficult but advantageous projects for the city was the completion of the Rocky Mount Sports Complex. After its use as a municipal airport, the area was used a crop-dusting operation for years, which caused environmental issues. Varney, city staff and the previous property owners managed a major cleanup of the contamination. The result was a state-of-the-art Sports Complex which currently brings in over \$10 million annually to the area. Varney also led completion of the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, a flood-recovery

project and one of the largest public-investment projects the city has ever undertaken.

He is married to Lin Varney. They have two sons, Seth and Ira.

Varney replaces Rochelle Small-Toney, who announced her retirement on Jan. 20. Small-Toney, who became city manager on July 3, 2017, will be on administrative leave until officially stepping down on Feb. 28.

Mayor Pro-Tem T. J. Walker expressed appreciation for Small-Toney's accomplishments in Rocky Mount.

"We celebrate the fact that she was our first African-American female city manager," Walker said.

About Rocky Mount

The city of Rocky Mount, located in the Coastal Plains of North Carolina, was incorporated in 1867 and lies in Edgecombe and Nash Counties. Rocky Mount is a two-time All-America City on the Tar River. Serving as the Gateway to Eastern North Carolina, the city's 875 employees serve approximately 58,000 residents daily.

The city's mission is to advance community well-being, safety and quality of life by delivering excellent public services and actively collaborating with the community toward a fulfilling and inspired future for its citizens. As a publicly owned utility, the city of Rocky Mount is committed to safe, reliable service for its customers and operates in Nash and Edgecombe counties, providing customers with electricity, natural gas, water, wastewater (sewer), refuse, recycling and/or stormwater services. To learn more, visit www.rockymountnc.gov for news and updates.

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