

## **John Dulcich Reflects on Longtime Council Tenure**

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John Dulcich's first taste of the political experience began with a very real, sincere conversation with his constituents.

"I told them I couldn't promise free ice cream," the longtime Newcastle councilmember recalls. "I had to be honest with them."

The constituents were his third-grade classmates, and the eventual class president delivered the bittersweet news in a speech written with a little help from his mom. That very first electoral victory would go on to inspire Dulcich's dedication to public service, highlighted by his more than 20-year commitment to serve the citizens of Newcastle.



Dulcich's current term on the Newcastle City Council expires at the end of the year, and he's decided now is the time to let the sun set on a council career that officially began when the city incorporated. He was first elected in 1994 and served until he briefly retired in 2007. He returned to the council after winning the election in 2009 and won re-election in 2013. He also served as Newcastle's mayor from 2002-05 and again in 2010-11.

"It's time to step aside and start a new chapter," Dulcich said. "But I want the citizens to know that I've gotten far more out of it than I've put in. I love this community and I hope everyone realizes that anything I did was for the community."

### **The Highs and Lows**

As Dulcich heads into his final month on the council, he's reflecting on the highs and lows of his tenure with bittersweet emotions.

He's proud of the work he put in to secure regional and federal funding to complete the Coal Creek Parkway expansion and save the city money on the three-phase project. Dulcich recalls personally contacting a group of bipartisan lawmakers including Sen. Patty Murray and former U.S. Rep. Jennifer Dunn to get appropriations for the project.

He fondly reflects on his sponsorship of the city's current door-to-door solicitor regulations, which requires solicitors to obtain a license from the city. This not only

helps weed out the non-legitimate solicitors but also allows police to check for licenses when they see door-to-door solicitors, Dulcich said.

A strong champion for public safety, Dulcich continually pushed for additional officers and the city's full-time detective. In fact, one of his final actions as a councilmember was putting forth a successful motion to hire an additional police officer in 2018.

His commitment to public safety stems, in part, from his experience during the city's darkest moment — the 2002 death of Newcastle Deputy Rich Herzog. Dulcich served as a beacon of strength and hope during that time, encouraging the community from his position as mayor.

When Dulcich looks back on it, he remembers how the community rallied together. Citizens showed up in force at a City Hall memorial service dedicated to Herzog. Residents lined the streets of Coal Creek Parkway to pay their respects. The Newcastle McDonald's held a fundraiser and donated all proceeds to Herzog's family.

"That was the city's most trying moment," Dulcich said. "But it showed the strength and resolve of this community. We came together and we took care of each other. I will never forget that."

### **Thank You, Newcastle**

Dulcich cannot talk about his time on the council without acknowledging the tough love, support and advice his wife Imelda offered throughout the years.

"The secret to my success on the council is, without a doubt, my wife Imelda," he said. "She's blessed me more than she could ever know. Without her support, I don't think I would have been as successful on the City Council or in life."

He also is quick to thank all of the councilmembers that served beside him and the hardworking city staff members he encountered during his time.

"We may not always agree on everything, but I like to think we were all trying to make Newcastle the best it could be," he said.

As Dulcich prepares to say goodbye to the council, he cannot help but gush about the city he calls home. His passion for all things Newcastle overflows into everything he does. Newcastle is often ranked as one of the best places to live in the nation - a feat that brings Dulcich much pride. The thing he will miss the most, though, is interacting with Newcastle community members and staff on a regular basis.

"At the end of the day, we've done a good job when people can say they are proud of the place they call home," he said. "It's truly a privilege to say I had a small hand in shaping this special community. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you."