

New mayor ready for the challenge

December 19, 2020



After he was first elected as a councilman in Crescent City, Jason Greenough's coworkers at Pelican Bay State Prison jokingly became to call him "mayor."

Last week, that joke became reality when Greenough was selected to lead the council for the next year. Greenough was chosen to be mayor of Crescent City by a 3-2 vote with new council members Alex Campbell and Beau Smith joining Greenough in the vote. Former Mayor Blake Inscore and Councilman Isaiah Wright voted for Inscore.

Greenough said although he knew he was going to be nominated, he was surprised to win.

"I spoke with one person and he asked me if I would accept the nomination to become mayor," Greenough said. "I said I would, but I did not expect it to go the way it did."

Greenough said his decision to accept the nomination had nothing to do with Inscore, who led the council the last four years.

“Nothing against our old Mayor Blake Inscore, he did a great job the last four years,” Greenough said. “He really digs into the issues and brings a lot of experience. I really value his opinions on this, but having him there for four years, I felt it was time for a change.”

Greenough first ran for city council four years because he wanted to make a difference in his community.

“At the time, we had just had my son,” he said. “I looked around and I saw this town, and I love this place. I really wanted to make a difference for my kids. I wanted to make it so if they wanted to stay here, they can.”

Greenough said the council for the last four years has had some successes, but as he takes over the top leadership spot on the council, there is a lot of work to do. He said due to COVID, the council has had to cut more than \$1 million from the city budget. Moving forward, he said he has two primary goals.

“My focus is two-fold, first, getting us through the COVID crisis which means making sure those who are most vulnerable to the virus are protected,” he said. “I want to encourage people to make wise decisions. When we do get a vaccine, I really hope can focus on getting the vaccine to those most susceptible to getting the virus.

“We will get through this as a city and as a country. I would like to move the city back to where we were, which is encouraging our local businesses and encouraging new businesses to town through economic development and encouraging staff to be as available as possible.”

Greenough said he thinks the city staff has done a very good job during the pandemic, saying City Manager Eric Wier has done an excellent job.

Like many cities along the California and Oregon coasts, Crescent City has been forced to change its economy. Once a booming logging town, that industry has almost disappeared. Government jobs — the prison along with schools, city, county and state government — are now the top employers. Greenough said the city needs to find ways to create new jobs.

“I would love to see Crescent City become a destination for tourists,” he said. “A lot of times when people come to the small towns, they drive through. I really want to get them to stop.”

Greenough said two ongoing projects could help make that happen. He pointed to the work to rebuild Front Street as the ongoing Beachfront Park Master Plan the city is working on.

“I think I share the sentiment of if you build it, they will come, though a lot of the time you have to advertise,” he said.

Tourism would be a start, but just a start.

“I would also like to see Crescent City become not only a tourist destination but also get back to our roots and become a working town,” he said. “Maybe not heavy industry, but light manufacturing small businesses.”

While Greenough has goals, he said he views being mayor no differently than being a regular council member.

“Honestly, the way I see the mayor, I’m one of five,” he said. “Yes, I run the meetings, I’m responsible for setting the agenda and I appoint my fellow members to different committees and ad hocs. Besides that, I see myself as one of five. You can’t get anything done without working with other people. I don’t think it’s meant to be a very powerful post. You can’t get anything done without at least two other votes. I think that’s a positive.”

As Greenough begins his term, he said his plan is to be mayor for just a year. In Crescent City, the council as a whole selects a mayor and mayor pro tem every year.

“I would like to see it change hands more often to let my fellow board members gain that experience and let their priorities be heard,” he said.

As he prepares to lead his first meeting, Greenough said his focus is city government does what it can for residents.

“I just really want to make sure the city is providing the essential resources to keep citizens safe, healthy and prosperous while not having a heavy hand,” he said.