

I am very sorry that we're not able to recognize you all in the Council Chambers. But you have adapted well to our virtual restrictions, and we're going to do the best we can under these circumstances. On behalf of the City staff, thank you for your many years of volunteer service as Councilors. You have served our City, our community, in a very important way. I have had the privilege of serving for the last three and a half years and observing you in action. As a legislative body, you have had your differences, and that was and *is* certainly **to be expected** – and in fact, it's important. Our government is a "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people...all the people." You were elected by our citizens, and you did your best to represent their interests and serve them.

You've each taken your responsibility very seriously, and devoted time to study the volumes of material we provided you on a regular basis. By my estimation, this represents over a thousand hours over the course of a four year term – 1104 – assuming 23 hours a month. You've served as points of contact for your constituents, and you've worked to educate them. You've been on the lookout for problems, and you've often proposed solutions.

It's been an honor for me to work for the people of Albany - under your guidance. I am personally appreciative of your support, I have enjoyed working with each of you, and I will miss your perspectives...and hope that I can occasionally call on you for that perspective.

On that note, I'll also make a request of you: After tonight, and for a little while, you might be very glad that you can use those many hours for other purposes. But eventually, I hope you'll commit to staying engaged in your own way. You are now members of the alumni association, and you're in a unique position to help our citizens understand governance. For those of us who are, or who once were entrusted with public office, I believe it's our civic responsibility. Look for opportunities to enlighten people, and look for opportunities to encourage them. And by you being involved and helping others to understand our government, we will be a stronger and better community.

Mayor, I'm going to take over the MC role here for a few minutes and give you a break. But remember, we still have a whole Council meeting to go...AND an ARA meeting.

We have a shadowbox for you too, and Matt's showing a picture of it, but I'll read the inscription:

"Sharon Konopa  
Mayor, January 2009 – December 2020  
City Councilor, Ward 2b, January 1997 – December 2008  
Lifelong volunteer and advocate for Albany

Presented to Mayor Konopa with great appreciation for her many years of dedication to the city of Albany — as mayor, councilor, and board member, and as a volunteer supporter of countless efforts to better our community. Her resolute commitment and her love for the city have

- furthered the revitalization of our downtown,
  - inspired residents to contribute countless hours of service to a greater Albany,
- and

- ensured the success of projects and programs that will benefit Albany for years to come.

Her contributions will have enduring impacts on the beautiful city that we all love.”

If we were in the Council Chambers, at this point, we would all rise and give a big round of applause to our outgoing Mayor and Councilors. It won't sound the same over GoToMeeting, but please don't let that stop you here.

Now, there are at least two people here who have seen this Council in action for much longer than I have. And I know each would like an opportunity to say a few words.

Lise Grato, Executive Director of ADA

Rebecca Bond, Executive Director of AVA

Kim Lyddane, our Parks and Recreation Director, would like to make a presentation to the Mayor. (Parks chair)

Eric Ikenouye also has a few comments

Chief Harnden...

Chief Wooton...

By Albany's standards, I'm a newcomer ...even after three and a half years on the job. But In the months after I arrived, when people would ask me how the new job was going, I would say to them that I had never felt more welcomed; the staff welcomed me, the community welcomed me, and the Council welcomed me. Mayor Konopa was a key component in creating this spirit. Her warm and welcoming attitude, and her obvious pride in her City, shine through.

Mayor, thank you for the support that you have provided to all of us. I quickly grew to appreciate the fact that you placed a lot of faith in your staff, and that you supported them in their efforts to Provide quality public services for a better Albany community.” That's something that we all aspire to earn...and to maintain: the trust of our leadership. But it was the support that you and the Council provided your staff that helped achieve CALEA accreditation, recognition for transparency, performance management awards, award winning concert series, and many more achievements.

Mayor, tonight, although I'm grateful for your support and help, I want to recognize you for the love of your City. You have spent 24 years on this Council, and 12 of those years as Mayor. You have devoted so many hours per week that it was often comparable to a full-time job. You worked exhaustively on investments in our downtown, on building the quality of life in Albany neighborhoods, on promoting our libraries and our historic districts, on homeless issues, on building a police station, a fire station, and yes, a carousel. You are a tireless cheerleader for your City and for its citizens. Even a near fatal accident that did permanent damage to your shoulder couldn't stop you from your service to your City. I've been

here for only a small part of the last twenty years, but from everything I've heard, the City has come a long way. As noted the other night in the Planning Commission meeting: this town is moving in the right direction.

As you leave the Council at the end of this traumatic year, we thank you for that level of energy and devotion...that love for the City of Albany. Many people see you out and about...every River Rhythms concert (and here's hoping that they come back next summer)...but few see the hours you put in, or the emails and phone calls you answer, the meetings you attend. I want you to know that we're grateful for that. And I suspect you will continue to be involved in many different ways. I hope you will be. The City needs that kind of dedicated service.

So, let me make one final presentation, and then we'll carry on with our Council meeting

The enclosed flag was flown over  
Albany City Hall, the Albany Police Station,  
and each of Albany's fire stations,  
libraries, and public buildings in honor of  
Mayor Sharon Konopa  
and her many years of service on the  
Albany City Council.

Thank you Mayor Konopa.