



# COUNCILWOMAN LISA GARST ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

*Highly Respected Member will join Partnership for Livable Roanoke Valley as Director*

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Salem City Councilwoman, Lisa Garst, handed in her resignation letter this evening during a closed session portion of the council's regularly scheduled meeting at City Hall. Garst, who was first elected to the city's governing body in 2008, will officially step down from her post on December 15, 2015 to take over as the Director for a Livable Roanoke Valley.

"Being on Salem City Council has been a tremendous honor and I am grateful for the trust Salem's citizens have shown in me," says Garst. "I would never make this move if I didn't know I could continue serving the citizens of Salem, this time just in a different capacity."

During her tenure, one of Garst's passions and greatest strengths has been her ability to work across jurisdictional lines. For the past four years, she has guided a variety of projects to benefit not only Salem residents, but citizens throughout the region while serving as the Chair of the Steering Committee for Livable Roanoke Valley.

"During my two terms on council, I have learned that for Salem and our region to be successful, we have to work together," she says. "That doesn't mean our communities lose what makes us each unique, instead we take the best and build on it. In the end, solid collaboration is the only way we can compete with Northern Virginia, Richmond and Tidewater."

Garst is a Covington native and Mary Baldwin College graduate, who lives in Salem with her husband Reid. The two own and operate Sterling-ES, a Salem-based engineering sales firm. During her time on council, she has been instrumental in promoting various stages of greenway construction, establishing the Salem Rotary Dog Park, recognizing green initiatives in the city and forming the Salem Fresh Ideas Garden to mention a few of her accomplishments. In 2011, she received the DePaul Woman of Achievement in Government Award.

"Lisa was elected to City Council about the same time I arrived in Salem, so it has been my pleasure to work alongside of her the past seven years on a variety of projects," says Kevin Boggess, Salem City Manager. "Lisa is a forward thinker and a consensus builder and while we hate to lose her on Council, I think she will do great things for the region in her new role."

Garst's current term on City Council was set to expire in the summer of 2016. Originally, she had hoped to stay on council while beginning her new job with Livable Roanoke Valley, but she elected to step down to avoid any possible conflict of interest between the two positions.

"With Livable Roanoke Valley, I will be concentrating on four main areas - economic development, workforce development, Healthy Roanoke Valley and natural assets," she says. "We have a plan in place that has been adopted by both government, community service and nonprofit agencies and I will be working with our partners to accomplish our strategic goals."

Garst and her husband have a daughter, who is a student at Salem High School and two family dogs, Mango and Cookie.

"I am passionate about working with our neighbors to promote quality of life issues that benefit us all," she says. "It's exciting to think about working with people in Virginia's Blue Ridge and the Alleghany Highlands to make these areas strong, vibrant and prosperous communities that our children will be proud to call home."

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