



December 2016

Michael Holenstein's juggling act

Following the resignation of Lynn Pannall (who has battled with her health), Michael Holenstein was voted in (by a single vote) as Mogale City's Mayor. Holenstein says he is up to the task of governing the municipality (www.timeslive.co.za), but he is likely to face a trying time keeping together a narrow coalition majority, managing inter-governmental tensions (municipaliq.co.za), as well as addressing the economic decline of the West Rand Gauteng region (municipaliq.co.za).

Hotelier and DA veteran councillor

Mayor Holenstein plans to retain Pannall's mayoral committee, succeeding her after securing 39 votes against the ANC's candidate, and Council Speaker, Patrick Naga Lipudi, who won 38 votes (www.iol.co.za).

With the ANC only narrowly losing control of Mogale City in August (having secured just under 49% of votes), the DA (which won 35% of votes) needs to keep its coalition partners including the Freedom Front Plus and IFP, and most importantly, EFF (which won 12% of votes), happy.

He is already at a disadvantage, coming in after other mayors have had 100 days to chart their way forward, as well as having to deal with the recent controversy in appointing a municipal manager (municipaliq.co.za), and a tumultuous council chamber, with Holenstein voted in after punches flew when the EFF voted as a block and not individually (www.jacarandafm.com).

But Holenstein comes with 10 years of experience as a councillor and has sold his business, De Hoek Country Hotel, to focus on his new responsibilities (www.timeslive.co.za). He has also expressed confidence that he can find a middle ground with the EFF in improving service delivery and combatting corruption (www.thenewage.co.za).

With a background in the hospitality industry as well as being a well-respected chef (onmyowning.blogspot.co.za), Holenstein's experience of balancing tall orders in a hot kitchen may well be useful.

It is interesting to consider that in 2012, he was already quoting a politician, Richard Nixon:

Defeat does not finish a man – quitting does. A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits.

Time will tell how the hotelier turned politician, who some might say parallels the USA's new president-elect Donald Trump, manages to fare.

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