



**Photos courtesy of Jay Hoeschler.**

## **El Segundo Planning Commissioner Jay Hoeschler Plans a Lengthy Stay in El Segundo**

**By Duane Plank**

El Segundo's Jay Hoeschler said that he relocated to our gem of a town for a simple reason: The El Segundo Unified School District. And now that his two daughters have passed through the school system, Hoeschler said that he and wife Reba and dog Eloise see no reason to leave the friendly confines of El Segundo.

Like some folks approached to star in a renowned *El Segundo Herald* profile, Hoeschler said that he was initially not too keen to participate in the process. But, after first contacting him three or so months ago, the El Segundo City Planning Commission member finally agreed to be interviewed.

A couple of neighbors had nominated Hoeschler to be the subject of a story. “I am not super-happy with being in the limelight,” Hoeschler shared, “but I am happy to participate.”

Hoeschler said that he lived in Manhattan Beach in the early 2000s when his eldest daughter was approaching her high school years. After considering the local high-schooling options for his daughters, Jay and Reba decided to move a few miles North and take advantage of what they considered the benefits of the ESUSD. A move that they have never regretted.

A University of Arizona graduate, Hoeschler moved to Los Angeles in the mid-’80s to further his chosen career in graphic design and advertising. He said he also did some art schooling in the Denver, Colorado environs, which, he wryly noted, happened to be in the near vicinity of some primo snow ski slopes, the powder of which he could take frequent advantage of.

Hoeschler has always been a proponent of participating in outdoor activities. Look up his profile page on LinkedIn, and you will see him posed next to one of the eight bikes that he and Reba own, with different style bikes suited for Strand cruising, tooling around the confines of the city or tackling the more rugged terrains of the mountains.

As mentioned, Hoeschler is a graphic designer by trade, and he worked for other companies before starting his own company, Avid Trails, in 2014, with founding partner Justin Lax.

Hoeschler said that he surveyed the situation at that time in his life and decided that there was a niche opening for his creative design talents that could be meshed with his love of outdoor endeavors. And, according to Hoeschler, no other firm was filling that void, so he dove in and has not regretted taking the entrepreneurial leap.

Before starting Avid Trails, Hoeschler said he met with one of the foremost experts on designing outdoor trails and soon partnered with Lax to go into business.

Lax is listed on the company's website as the president, with Hoeschler billed as the design director and Troy Duffin as the technical director. Lax, who has known Hoeschler for a dozen years, said that the partnership continues to thrive.

"Jay is an incredible business partner," Lax said. "I tell people all the time how grateful I am to have such a dedicated, passionate, hardworking, and experienced business partner. He is remarkably skilled at not only the creative work we do at Avid Trails but managing client relationships and keeping things highly organized. Jay also seems always to know the right thing to say and do in a moment of crisis, which is extremely helpful to our entire team. He makes work fun and enjoyable for all of us.

"Well, I am not sure it is appropriate to talk about age here, but I am in my thirties while Jay is in his 50s. My first point on that is how I am always amazed that Jay has as much energy, passion, and endurance as any of my contemporaries at this stage in life. He is up before anyone I know and either working or working out, and he always pushes himself to produce the best work product and creative thinking for our clients no matter how much work it takes. He also constantly pushes himself physically with exercise and outdoor pursuits, which I think has a lot to do with how he stays so sharp. My second point on the age difference is that obviously, Jay is a mentor to me on every level of professional life. His experience and wisdom have helped me immensely, and I know I can always count on him to provide good advice when needed. Again, I am incredibly lucky to have him as a partner, mentor, and friend."

Hoeschler calls Avid Trails "A passion project. We work hard to create beautiful trails that fit naturally in the landscape and take people to places that would otherwise be difficult to get to. One of the highest compliments we get when building a new trail is

hearing someone say, 'It seems like that trail has always been there.' It's a good feeling to know our trail planning and building helps people get outside and enjoy nature."

"I have the best job in the world," he said.

While not working his day (and probably night) job with Avid Trails, Hoeschler has served on the city of El Segundo's Planning Commission for the past four years.

Ryan Baldino chairs that commission and was, for a time, a neighbor of Hoeschler's. Baldino called Hoeschler "a valuable part of the commission. He brings advocacy (to the commission) about the South Bay Bicycle program." Baldino said that Hoeschler is very adept at asking probing questions about what a proposed project "is all about. Jay brings a level of intelligence and a sense of humor to the process."

Speaking of Hoeschler's neighbors, Libby Barr emailed that "I have known Jay since 2017 when we moved in across the street from him. I saw him out front talking to my dad and wearing a backpack. I was fairly sure he was selling something and tried to steer clear of him for as long as possible until my dad called me out front. We quickly became good friends. Good enough friends that when one night I needed to go to the hospital, we knocked on his door at 3 a.m., and he came over and then proceeded to watch our kids for the following day as well.

"He is a dynamic guy involved in the city planning commission, has an interesting small business that he started, enjoys bicycling, great sense of humor, brews beer, and is quite handy. A true renaissance man! He has a passion for El Segundo and a real zest for life."

Hoeschler neighbor Neal Von Flue chimed in: "I've known Jay for a few years now. Jay is not only a talented graphic designer and trail builder, but a deeply committed member of the El Segundo Community. His work on various city committees and volunteerism around the city, as well as his friendliness, make him a true asset to the community."

As an avid proponent of and participant in outdoor activities, Hoeschler has participated in multiple triathlons, solo-hiked the John Muir trail, a trek of over 200 miles, and scaled the heights of Mt. Whitney, the mountains peak poking into the ozone at about 14,500 feet, four times.

As for more indoor pursuits, Hoeschler crafts IPA brewskis, which he gifts to his neighbors during the Holiday season to help grease the skids for December festivities.

Hoeschler said he cherishes the interactions that he has with his neighbors, noting that those neighbors range from those who have been ensconced in El Segundo for more than fifty years, to those families who are fairly new arrivals.

“We are so fortunate that we have awesome neighbors,” he said.

And Hoeschler related that, as a Planning Commissioner, he is tasked with looking forward as, hopefully, the scourge of COVID-19 continues to abate. He said that he hopes, as California opens up, that “We have changed, and spend more time outside.”

Hoeschler said that, looking to the future as a Planning Commissioner, that the evolving city of El Segundo administrators will continue to implement “smart planning” and continue to stress “quality of life.”

It appears that the city of El Segundo is fortunate to have folks like Jay Hoeschler mapping out the future of our city.