

City of Piedmont  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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DATE: December 18, 2017

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Paul Benoit, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Receipt of a Presentation from David Metz of Fairbanks, Maslin, Maulin, Metz and Associates (FM3) Regarding Recently Completed Aquatics Survey

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**BACKGROUND**

An ad hoc subcommittee of its membership was established by City Council on July 3, 2017. The subcommittee, comprised of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor, was charged with reviewing and recommending approaches for how best to undertake the following agreed upon next-steps relative to development of a new Piedmont Aquatics Facility:

1. Complete an Examination of Potential Funding Mechanisms;
2. Develop Strategies for Public Outreach and Communication to Ensure a Thorough Understanding of the Proposal and it's Financial Implications on the Piedmont Community; and
3. Explore Options to Effectively Evaluate Community Interest and Support for a New Aquatics Facility (Polling).

Relative to steps 2 and 3, the subcommittee discussed options and approaches with David Metz, of the opinion research firm FM3, and with Barry Barnes of the firm TBWB Strategies. Based on their expert opinions and advice, the subcommittee chose to move forward with recommending polling prior to making any major investment in public education. The reasoning was that it is best to understand how voters feel about issues on the basis of what they already know, and, depending on survey results, to use the knowledge gained to guide the content and approach of a public education initiative.

At its meeting of September 5, 2017 the City Council, based on the recommendation of staff and the subcommittee, awarded a contract to the public opinion research and strategy firm of Fairbanks, Maslin, Maulin, Metz and Associates (FM3) to develop and field a survey to 300 to 400 registered Piedmont voters in order to evaluate community interest and support for a new aquatics facility.

Between September 6 and October 25, FM3 worked closely with City Staff to develop a survey instrument aimed to gauge community support for a potential Recreation Facilities Improvement Bond, with a primary focus on aquatics. Between October 26 and November 5, 457 Piedmont voters were surveyed. David Metz, principal and president of FM3, will present the key findings of the survey at this meeting.

While Mr. Metz will review the results in detail, overall, the survey indicated that Piedmont residents are very pleased with the direction the community is moving in, with 71% of residents rating the City government's performance in providing services as "good to excellent". Relative to service quality, all City departments received high marks, with 86% of residents having a favorable view of the Recreation Department. Relative to aquatics, depending on phrasing of the survey question, up to 53% indicated support for a bond measure for a new facility.

Given the results of the polling effort, staff recommends initiation of a "Public Outreach and Communication Initiative" to ensure a thorough understanding of the proposal and its financial implications on the Piedmont community (Task #2, noted above). That task could be followed by a re-polling of the community to determine whether we can reach the required 2/3 majority needed to pass a bond measure. If the Council is in agreement with pursuit of this next step, I would recommend reconvening the ad-hoc Council subcommittee to examine approaches and to work with staff to develop a proposal for review by the full Council and community.

By: Sara Lillevand, Recreation Director