

A. CALL TO ORDER:

A Special Study Session of the Troy City Council was held on Monday, March 18, 2019, at City Hall, 500 W. Big Beaver Rd. Mayor Slater called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. ROLL CALL:

- a) Mayor Dane Slater
Edna Abraham
Mayor Pro Tem Ethan Baker
David Hamilton
Dave Henderson
Ellen Hodorek - Absent
Ed Pennington

C. DISCUSSION ITEM:

C-1 Community Survey Topics, Survey Design and Preparation with EPIC-MRA

Mayor Slater opened the meeting and turned the discussion over to City Manager Mark F. Miller. Mr. Miller introduced the discussion topic and explained that the City has contracted EPIC-MRA to conduct a resident and business community survey. Mr. Miller turned the discussion over to John Cavanaugh from EPIC-MRA.

Mr. Cavanaugh thanked City Administration for providing a wealth of background material that helped him prepare for tonight's meeting. He complimented those responsible for the City website and the vast amount of information that helped him develop ideas for a questionnaire. Mr. Cavanaugh began by sharing their company's background soliciting information for schools pertaining to support for a millage or bond. He said the questionnaire will begin with general atmosphere questions and then provide a list of items to determine a priority among various topics on the survey. He explained that there are topics that are difficult to encapsulate in a few questions, such as telecommunication towers. He discussed creating questions that inform the individual of potential landmines resulting from their answer while also presenting them in a manner that is unbiased. Mr. Cavanaugh suggested being mindful that the recipient is hearing the information and not reading it, so they try to limit the amount of detail, such as millage rates, and provide context information, such as a dollar amount, instead. Mr. Cavanaugh provided ideas on addressing questions about green space, renovations to the Family Aquatic Center, and a Town Center, which he said could be a survey unto itself. He said questions can be phrased to determine the intensity of belief on various topics and the overall feeling about the City. He also discussed open-ended questions and recommended limiting those types of questions. He said the purpose of the survey is to provide guidance to the legislative body. He commented that the methodology and instrument is different between a survey and a focus group. He commented that focus groups can be used preferably at the end after the results of the survey, which includes a comprehensive demographic battery by age, income, race/ethnicity, gender, and education level. He said the survey results report includes the questionnaire with answers filled in with percentages, along with a cross-tabulation report which dissects each question by zip code, age, cohorts, gender, etc. Mr. Cavanaugh explained that

they are then tasked with the responsibility to analyze the cross-tabulation report to identify subsets that differ from the norm by substantial amounts and provide a narrative report highlighting the results. Mr. Cavanaugh explained that there are challenges with conducting surveys from businesses that can be alleviated by announcements from the local Chamber of Commerce. He welcomed questions from City Council.

Council Member Abraham asked if there is a conjoint analysis that can be used to determine a preference or willingness to allocate funds. Mr. Cavanaugh said it would be difficult to pose questions without addressing a specific topic or a specific amount.

Council Member Abraham commented that the Library millage is coming up for renewal and she asked if it would be placed on the survey at the same rate as today. He said the question would be phrased to determine whether residents would be willing to vote for the millage increase or be in favor of a scaled back backup plan.

Council Member Baker commented that there was discussion to find out if people were willing to pay more to have the library open on Fridays. He said the discussion of a community survey originally involved several topics, and he does not want the community to think that City Council only wants to raise taxes. He said he would like some of the questions to address specific amounts and allocation of funds. Mr. Cavanaugh said there are two questions maximum that would address a millage increase and would fall toward the end of the survey.

Council Member Pennington asked if the survey will be conducted only by phone. Mr. Cavanaugh said the survey will be a live operator phone interview.

Council Member Pennington asked how they would ensure the phone interviewer is reaching the decision maker during the business survey interviews. Mr. Cavanaugh indicated that there is an intro script where the interviewer would ask questions to reach the appropriate person.

Council Member Henderson said early on he understood the community survey was to gather information on the Town Center. He asked how will they drill down the information to determine what is acceptable by the people, such as keep it status quo, develop it into a central park, or develop the property. Mr. Cavanaugh said he can go in any direction as directed by City Council.

Council Member Henderson mentioned that the information for the library addresses a millage increase, but he would also like a question to determine interest in supporting a 6 or 7-day library.

Council Member Henderson questioned whether telecommunications is a necessity if there are other topics that need to be addressed.

Council Member Henderson asked if using survey sites, such as Survey Monkey to conduct the survey to increase the sample size would also increase the cost exponentially. Mr. Cavanaugh commented that it would increase the cost, but not exponentially. He said they typically recommend this in smaller communities where they mail a postcard to unique residential addresses that contains a control number for one member of the household to take the survey. He said they recommend conducting live operator phone interviews since it offers more control and integrity for the survey.

Council Member Hamilton agrees with Council Member Henderson in that any telecommunications questions can be very brief. He commented that one option that many residents have expressed interest in for the library is turning it into a district library with its own board. Council Member Hamilton questioned the sample size for the residential and business survey and whether the survey includes cell and landlines. Mr. Cavanaugh responded that the residential and business surveys are separate, and they proposed a 400-600 sample size. He said cost varies with the interview length and sample size, and he discussed how sample size affects margin of error.

Council Member Hamilton commented that care should be used when phrasing the Town Center questions to make sure the information is not skewed. Mr. Cavanaugh indicated the questions can provide options, but also make sure that the options will have costs associated with them.

Mayor Slater confirmed with Mr. Cavanaugh that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to determine the topics and provide guidance on questions. He commented that the community survey began as a result of the Town Center and should be the main focus. He commented that the Town Center Concept bullet points provided in the memorandum are very helpful. Mayor Slater commented that the survey conducted back in 2011 was excellent because the survey asked the residents their priorities. He said the survey results determined that Trails and Pathways came out on top, and he expects them to come out on top with this survey. Mayor Slater commented that the library is a priority because the millage is expiring soon. He commented the climate has changed since 2011 and as a result, he would like questions asking residents if they are in favor of a 7-day library with a millage increase or if they are in favor of turning the library into a separate entity district library.

Council Member Baker commented that he was surprised that the Family Aquatic Center is a topic and questioned whether it should be included in the survey.

Council Member Baker asked how the Town Center Concept will be defined and whether residents will be familiar with the terminology. City Manager Miller indicated there is a definition of a Town Center that provides a general description of what a Town Center is. Council Member Baker commented that questions on a central park may be clearer if phrased as a central park component of the Civic Center complex.

Council Member Abraham spoke about the demographics and how they will be charted for the business community. Mr. Cavanaugh commented that the larger the business, the less likely they will be able to reach someone in a position to answer the survey.

Council Member Abraham spoke about the topic of telecommunication towers and suggests that there be questions to determine the public interest, especially for residents that are on the west side of the City.

Council Member Henderson commented that the Big Beaver Shuttle is only on the business survey. He mentioned that it should also be included on the residential survey.

Council Member Henderson commented on the options of the Town Center to be included in the survey.

Council Member Pennington commented that the Town Center, green space and the library are the top three topics to be addressed in the survey. He commented that he would like to see a second set of data, aside from the phone interview, that would hold less weight but allow people to participate in the survey. Mr. Cavanaugh commented that there are about 28,000 unique household addresses in the City plus non-profit mailing costs. Mr. Miller commented that the City may be able to accomplish this with the new tool, MyCivicApp, where people can sign up to do polls, as questions, etc.

Mayor Slater cautioned to have the expert be the expert because he does not want the data to skew the survey. Mr. Cavanaugh commented that it would be very important to execute the phone interviews prior to conducting a survey using the MyCityApp.

Council Member Hamilton asked an estimated time for the survey, and he said he would like City Council to receive a copy of the 2011 survey so they can compare the two.

Mayor Slater commented that the questions on the Aquatic Center can be removed, and he mentioned that the questions on telecommunications should be provided to those residents that live around at the park.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT:

E. ADJOURNMENT:

The Meeting **ADJOURNED** at 7:08 PM.

Mayor Dane Slater

Cheryl A. Stewart, CMC
Deputy City Clerk