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## Roads Poll Moves Forward

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Roughly 35 citizens were in attendance at last week's Orinda City Council meeting, and several addressed the Council before it decided in favor of polling Orindans for their opinions on fixing Orinda's roads.

Orinda resident Diana Stephens conducted a survey in her Crestview Drive neighborhood and summarized the results for the Council, saying there are residents who feel the City is not doing enough to protect the interests of its citizens.

Regarding a potential parcel tax, Stephens told the Council, "You need to address all of the reasons that previous parcel tax measures failed. (Residents) really need to hear you clearly address each and every concern," before putting additional measures on the ballot. She also suggested that a master plan for roads be created and shared with the community that wants to have a better understanding of the issues involved.

Resident Clyde Vaughn spoke next, expressing his opposition to future roads ballot measures and stating that Council has tried twice to pass similar measures and "failed miserably at the ballot box each time."

Vice Mayor Glazer noted that prior roads ballot measures received 64 percent of the vote, very close to the 66.7 percent that was needed to prevail, and commended Stephens and her neighbors for their initiative and "willingness to come together for the greater good."

Glazer explained that the City had previously attempted a single long-term strategy to fix all infrastructure problems at once, for which it received 64 percent approval. The Council's Roads Subcommittee, composed of Glazer and Council Member Sue Severson, is now looking at the possibility of fixing problems in phases - he suggested that a phased approach might prove to be more affordable for residents, and allow the City to demonstrate that it can efficiently complete projects before going back to residents on an incremental basis over the next several years.

The Council then discussed whether or not to authorize staff members to use City funds to contract with a professional polling company to solicit residents' feedback regarding repair and maintenance funding options, including different types of taxes, amounts, and durations - the results would assist the Council in determining what, if anything, Orindans believe they can afford to pay in order to fix roads.

Several Council members observed at different times that professional polling data provides City Council, staff, and citizens with unbiased views of residents' concerns and wishes. Reflecting on Lafayette's recent roads ballot defeat and the economy, Smith said polling was key.

The Council voted unanimously to contract with Fairbanks, Maslin, Maulin, Metz and Associates to develop and conduct the new poll for an amount not to exceed \$16,350. Also known as FM3, the Council noted this firm came in with the lowest bid, has experience working with Orinda on prior polls, and agreed to work within the city's timeline, completing the polling by the end of January, 2012. The poll will be paid for from the City's reserves.

"It's not about what we, the Council, think is best or would like to do, it's about what the citizens of this community desire to do, or what level of support they're willing to lend to repair and improve our roads," concluded Severson.

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[back](#)

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