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Search for city manager seeks public engagement

By Pippa Fisher



Paul Kimura leads a brainstorming meeting attended by a handful of Lafayette residents March 26. Photo Pippa Fisher

A handful of residents came out March 26 to give input on considerations for hiring a city manager. It is part of the city council's effort to include as many residents as possible as it makes its decision in hiring the next manager to take the helm in Lafayette.

Paul Kimura of Avery & Associates, the recruitment firm chosen by the city council, arranged the meeting. One of the conditions placed on the firm by the council was that it must seek public engagement in several formats.

Kimura led the informal brainstorming session in what he described as "getting a flavor of the community."

Though their numbers were small, the audience's voice was still loud and clear.

"His/her vision should be consistent with that of the council," said one.

From another, "We need a city manager who's aware of issues around climate change and sustainability."

Other comments included the need for strength of character, persuasiveness, kindness, determination, a master communicator, someone with connections at the state level, someone with specifically California experience, fiscally prudent, financially savvy, an experienced urban planner who will be inclusive.

Is this akin to finding a unicorn?

Kimura seemed undaunted. He said he hoped to start with between 30 and 40 candidates and then to narrow it down to around five or eight candidates for serious consideration by the council. "We are about quality numbers, not raw numbers," he said, explaining that they will be putting out a marketing brochure to advertise and will also go to their database.

The solicitation for community input will continue in the form of an online survey and phone calls.

Kimura anticipates the search and hiring will take between four and five months to complete.

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[back](#)

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