



January 18, 2021

Piedmont City Council
City of Piedmont
120 Vista Avenue
Piedmont, CA 94611

Re: Selection Process of the City of Piedmont Mayor and Vice Mayor

Dear Councilmembers:

I write to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Piedmont (LWVP). LWVP supports greater flexibility in the criteria for selecting the mayor and values the importance of transparency in local government. We take the position that the City Council criteria for selecting the mayor should include consideration of city government experience, seniority, leadership abilities and communication skills in addition to the most-votes tradition. This tradition holds that whichever member receives the highest number of votes in his or her first election to the Council becomes mayor during his or her second term – if reelected. We also take the position that the process and criteria for selecting the City's mayor should be publicly disclosed.

I and other members of LWVP observed the City Council meeting that was held on December 7, 2020. During this meeting, the Council elected the Mayor and Vice Mayor for the City of Piedmont. We were pleased to see discussion by the Council about criteria other than the "most-votes" tradition, however, we would like to encourage the Council to formalize its selection process to be more than merely "at the pleasure of the council."

We believe that not having a clear process can lead to misinterpretation of the process and to the perception of poor governance at best and impropriety at worst. This is especially true when the process is not disclosed to the public. In 2014 and 2015, LWVP conducted a study on, among other things, the selection process of the City of Piedmont mayor and vice mayor. In completing this study, a survey was conducted of 11 small cities in the Bay Area that have a city manager form of government similar to Piedmont, with the city mayors selected by their respective city councils. Information about mayoral selection policies and mayoral terms of office was gathered on all 11 cities. A copy of that study is attached for you to use as a resource.

The League of Women Voters of Piedmont urges the City Council to formalize its process for selection of mayor and vice mayor and further recommends that the City engage in a campaign

to inform the public about this process, especially in times leading up to an election. Transparency in government is of utmost importance and we are more than willing to help with education efforts in our newsletters, website and voter services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LAP', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lorrel A. Plimier
President, League of Women Voters Piedmont