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Question/Comment

Foremost, please postpone the commission's vote. There's too much still up in the air about site selection. The four proposed sites are all problematic. The original proposal, and the one that still seems to get the most attention--to site the wellness center in the flood plain--is to risk catastrophe. Last year's flood may be only a taste. I have consulted with hydrologists, climate scientists, and engineers, and all, unanimously, agree that putting the wellness center in the flood plain would be folly.

Second, there may be less expensive alternatives—for example, to build the swimming facility first, independent of the Wellness Center. That has been Livingston's principal need, widely expressed, for years. There's no reason that the functions included in the originally proposed design have to be integrated in a single building.

Third, the recent state property tax increase—dramatic and painful for most Montana taxpayers—makes it extremely unlikely that Livingston voters would approve any additional burden to pay for the Wellness Center in the near future. Your poll was conducted under very different circumstances.

Fourth, there is increasing evidence—admittedly, this is subjective on my part, but I believe it to be accurate—that a great many people here are perceiving this whole process to be “top down”: a project to benefit the few at the expense of the many. I know that's not really true, but the perception is growing, and the city must do something to meet that challenge—before voting to approve any project going forward.

Tom McNamee