

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH

April 25, 2014

The Communications Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Stan Mills on Friday, April 25, 2014 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Stan Mills, Toni Sharp, Jimmy Horty III
Absent: Lorraine Zellers, Janet Anderson
Also Present: Max Hamby (IT Director), Sharon Lynn (City Manager), Karen Zakarian (Marketing Director)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda, as amended with the deletion of the February 28, 2014 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes, was unanimously approved. The December 6, 2013 Communication Committee Meeting Minutes were approved at a previous meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the October 25, 2013 and January 24, 2014 Communications Committee Meetings were distributed prior to the meeting.

Jimmy Horty made a motion, seconded by Toni Sharp, to approve the October 25, 2013 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Jimmy Horty made a motion, seconded by Toni Sharp, to approved the January 24, 2014 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Update and discussion about ongoing City website overhaul.

Karen Faulk, copywriter, was not in attendance at the meeting.

Stan had distributed Website Overhaul Advancement Process was distributed prior to the meeting. The highlights are reviewing the process, how to get to the point of going live and reiterating points from the Committee.

Max provided an update regarding the City website overhaul. At this point, Inclind has basically fulfilled the scope of work in the contract. Currently, it is time to bring to Inclind's attention errors and omissions and have it fix them. Max is hoping to get some static content to put into it. The dynamic content will be tested as well. That phase ends the first week in May 2014. Max has not found anything that does not work. Inclind has fulfilled the punch list. The first week in May 2014 is the end of Inclind's scope of services. Inclind was hired to provide the platform and design, etc. which is the technical piece of the puzzle. It is not Inclind's responsibility for the content other than what is provided by the Committee. Karen Faulk is working on the content.

Sharon said that Karen has been meeting with department heads which has enabled her to organize her thoughts and introduction to the City and what is needed from each department to be able to produce the content to put on the site. By meeting with department heads who have unique perspectives of their own outside of what the Committee, Sharon or Max might feel from the technical side which has been helpful to Karen so she will be able to customize each department to make it more personal to what the department is. Karen has two more people to meet with, Kent Buckson and Corey Groll. Chuck Snyder will be providing a drawing of the Convention Center to Max t obe incorporated into the website. The lifeguard website will be linked to the City website. The police website needs to come alive again in a different form. Currently, the content is outdated. Police Chief Keith Banks has been unable to change or update the content. Chief Banks has a different model that he would like to see. Karen is in agreement to come up with the content for that site. Karen is still onboard to hand everything over to the City on June 1, 2014.

She will be in attendance at the next meeting on May 23, 2014.

Max noted that the beach patrol, police department and bandstand operate their own independent websites. None of these websites relate back and look like they are City owned and are City divisions. It is intended in the future to recreate their content inside of the City website, and brand it with the City look and feel. Possibly in Fall 2014 and Winter 2015, the sequence of moving content in and starting to build their own portion of the City website, much like what will be done with the Convention Center.

Sharon noted that when Karen turns over what she has created, the City will have a website ready to launch. Max has been meeting with Karen. Karen has been doing the work behind the scenes, and she is on target to be finished with this on June 1, 2014. After June 1, 2014 Karen will be there for the City.

Max said that it is his intention to receive periodic deliveries of the content as soon as she is done with it. This way he can get started and there is not a huge task at the end of it. His goal is to minimize the period of time between the end of her contract and the content being on the website. Max will need to speak more with Karen before he can commit to a deadline. Max believed he would be able to provide the deadline on May 23, 2014.

Stan noted that Karen is collecting and providing the information to the IT Department, but then the IT Department will be putting the content on the website.

Stan asked what the future involvement of the Committee is going to be. It has expressed a desire to be the first to keep critiquing it. The Committee's expectation is that there would be subsequent reviews of the website and response and then maybe another review session and response.

Sharon said that her intention is to give the Committee a finished product that the Committee will be satisfied with. Then the City would carry on the Committee's goals from the beginning to make sure that the website is updated on a regular basis. The Committee will see the finished product itself on a daily basis. The website will be what the Committee expected it to be. Sharon's expectation is to have the content and launch and have it go live. It was fine with her to see the website to critique it, but she did not know how or if that would delay the launch to the public. The department heads and IT Department will make sure the departmental content remains fresh and accurate.

Toni noted that the managerial responsibility for the accuracy, navigation and the user-friendly aspect of the site lies with Sharon and her team. Review by Committee is challenging. She preferred Sharon's approach.

Jimmy said that it would not be good or time efficient to wait a month to have anything updated on the website for content, etc. Each individual department making any updates should not require the Committee's approval. If a major change would be made to the appearance of the website, it should be discussed at the Committee's meeting.

Toni said that once the site has been blessed by the department heads and the City Manager, she sees herself as an individual who would have a hyper level of interest in how the site works for her as a user. Her personal role would be to make sure that expectations have been delivered. It would not be a structured role, but it would be a hyper-vigilant interaction with the site to raise any red flags, if needed.

Max said that the Committee will be constantly evaluating what can be done better.

Sharon noted that when the new site is launched, the consumer will be able to experience (1) ease of use, (2) information that is current and glaring, (3) modernization and up-to-date and (4) freshness.

Max acknowledged that a person will not be able to fill out a form and submit it electronically. He and Max are making sure that it is the responsibility of the department heads to provide the forms to him so they can be placed on the website.

Sharon said that currently it is not part of the plan to bring in a marketing firm to professionalize the site. Marketing the City would be left to Main Street and Chamber of Commerce. Karen Zakarian said that an important step is to keep the website fresh, and she suggested that this could be done by a marketing firm.

Max said that he will know more regarding the timeline and a launch date after he meets with Karen Faulk next week. At this time, he has no deliverables in hand from Karen.

Sharon said that the Committee needs to decide to give direction as to where it wants Sharon and Max to go. Karen Faulk will be here in May so the Committee will get to see a product then. Beyond that point, it will be up to Sharon to make sure that Max is on target for making the website live. It is up to the Committee if it wants an additional layer of oversight. She was fine with doing that if this was the Committee's charge from the beginning and it wants to continue with that. Sharon hoped the website will meet the Committee's expectation when it goes

live. If it is not perfect, then the Committee can incorporate the next ideas without changing what is already there.

Stan said that he and Janet Anderson had expected to review the link to website for the next review. He thought that the criteria for going live would be a sufficient review by the Committee, sufficient responsiveness to critiques and enough new content such as the forms, Convention Center and new material to warrant all the hoopla touted in the pending new site. He felt that earlier the Committee's voice was not being heard, but now there are some expectations of new things in the website.

Karen Zakarian noted that there has been no communication between when the meetings are held. The concern has been that there have been no emails, no phone calls, no suggested look at the website and no changes presented. She suggested that there should be a way to communicate with everyone.

Sharon and Max have been meeting in between time, and Karen Faulk has been given the time and opportunity to perform as part of the contract she has with the City.

Discussion of any additional recommended content for the new website.

Stan suggested that Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) could become part of the website. As a condition of accepting monies for smoke-free initiative in the City, it was agreed to create a separate webpage if the granted is accepted. Stan has acquired some of the art for this, and he will provide Max with suggested content through the City Manager. The timeline for this is that this initiative will become effective on May 15, 2014. An icon/logo should be placed on the home page to link to the webpage.

Toni said that with regard to the home page, things such as the sewer update and the smoke-free initiative should be put on there that are timely so residents will see something to tell them in real time what is going on. Sharon said this will be done on the home page.

Sharon mentioned that Code Red is a tool that will soon be launching in the City to alert citizens, visitors, etc. Marketing will be done to alert people that they can sign up for it. A link will be provided on the website to sign up. A message will be sent out via email, text, voice mail, etc. notifying people about emergencies, weather driven events, etc. Code Red will be launched by the end of May 2014. A press release will be done to let people know that Code Red will be available.

Toni suggested using E-News to let people know about Code Red.

Discuss optimizing communications with members of the public at meetings.

Stan has asked each member if there is anything that can be done either now or in the future for the new municipal complex with regard to optimizing communications with members of the public at meetings. He distributed an outline on letting the public see what the commissioners see. Before the meeting, there is a support document packet program and the ongoing business on the website. During the meetings, there are handouts and some of the projector. An idea would be to use a bulletin board to show the B&L Report, Permit of Compliance drawings, Board of Adjustment site plans and the same for the Planning Commission. How communications could be optimized would be through more handouts, promoting the use of ongoing business, promoting the use of support document packets, promoting the use of powerpoint presentations/projector, having a laptop onsite with a remote, having a better quality projector and having better audio quality.

Jimmy suggested the use of a smart board and having wi-fi for guests. A link would be provided on the smart board so everyone at the meeting would be able to follow along as to what the topics are. A lot of municipalities and organizations are leaning towards using smart boards. If a deadline is missed, then handouts could be provided.

Stan thought that possibly in the future, the City Secretary would be the steward of the laptop to load the presentations, and the Commissioners would use a remote.

Jimmy suggested that a recommendation should be forwarded from the Committee to the Commissioners of the benefit to the people who would be sitting in the audience at meetings, and procedures of how optimizing communication would be done.

Sharon said that these suggestions should be done.

Discuss Committee's long term objectives.

Toni said that she would like to know what the Committee characterizes as a success for 2014 and what the Committee should focus on in 2015.

Stan said that the Committee has an internal policy to review the website on a quarterly basis. The support

document program has been created, and the Committee will be monitoring it. The Committee will have the new website to provide input on. The Committee will gain better website maintenance and updates. A few things in how to optimize communications to the public could be accomplished.

Toni did not understand what the social media strategy is going to be. She asked if this discussion would be germane to the Committee or if it would best be left to the guidance of the City Manager to come up with how to proceed.

Sharon said that the City will be getting into the realm of social media initially by using Code Red so there will be a place for that through Facebook and other social media sites. In order to have social media, a dedicated communications specialist will be needed. A bigger staff would be needed to handle it. Sharon thought that as long as there is a Communications Committee, then this would be the forum for discussing a social media strategy.

Toni said that she would like to see Mayor Cooper have a Twitter account in the next 90-120 days to possibly use in emergency situations. The Committee will need to start creating objectives and start talking about the social media world.

Sharon and Max will put together a presentation that will give the Committee the powerful use of Facebook today.

Jimmy said that the Committee would be doing a disservice to the City if social media is not recommended to the Commissioners. A City controlled Facebook page is needed.

Toni suggested the use of live video streaming since there are many non-resident property owners.

Stan noted that the Committee had discussed this topic a long time ago. At that time, the conclusion was that unless a lot of money would be spent, a single camera would not be sufficient. He thought that the audio is sufficient.

Sharon thought that TV cameras could be incorporated in the meeting room, having a TV presence through cable and having a TV room when the new City Hall is built.

Toni said that the community should be asked what it thinks significant communications issues are. She asked if this should be on a parallel track with the launching of the website.

Max said that formal surveys could be provided on the website with regard to this subject.

Jimmy thought that different topics should be placed on social media, and there should be roundtable discussions amongst the Committee members.

Discuss and prioritize items to include on future agendas.

Items to be included on a futures agenda are: 1. Social Media. 2. Web status. 3. Meeting Karen Faulk. 4. Possible website demonstration.

Schedule next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on May 23, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

Committee Member Comment

There was none.

Citizen Comment

There was none.

There being no further business, Chairman Mills adjourned the meeting at 10:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
JUNE 27, 2014**

(Stan Mills, Chairman)