

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH

June 27, 2014

The Communications Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Chairman Stan Mills on Friday, June 27, 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 (arrived at 9:17 a.m.), Lorraine Zellers, Janet Anderson

Also Present: Max Hamby (IT Director), Sharon Lynn (City Manager), Karen Zakarian (Marketing Director), Karen Faulk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda, as amended with the deferral of the Minutes to later in the meeting, was unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

OLD BUSINESS

Update and discussion about ongoing City website overhaul.

1. Discuss web project including but not limited to status and management of project, project budget, process and timeline to advance including going live; possible demonstration of new website components and Committee comment.

Max Hamby, IT Supervisor, said that currently the new City website is on budget with regard to Inclind. Inclind is currently working on several issues which he had pointed out as he has been working on the site. The City is in the support phase of the contract. There has been substantial completion, and the City has accepted what Inclind has provided. Inclind is pretty much done unless the City asks it to do something which is outside of the scope of the original contract. There is still an ongoing contract with Karen Faulk, content writer. Currently, Max has received everything from Karen. With regard to inputting the content, the website is approximately 65% complete.

Karen Faulk of Night Owl Marketing LLC was contracted by the City with the deliverables to be completed by June 1, 2014. She had completed them before June 1, 2014. She has met with all the department heads with the exception of Beach Patrol and Alderman Court. Staff had its own information to share to make the website better. She has supplied Max with the information piece by piece to update the current website along with additional items such as weddings, etc. Transportation was improved to show that the City is accessible by land, air and sea. Karen emailed information to Karen Zakarian for her and Chuck Snyder to review regarding the Convention Center. A diagram with seating arrangements was received from Karen Zakarian. Karen Faulk's content is currently 100% updated.

Max noted that all the information is being provided to him as word documents. Karen Faulk was not inputting anything into the actual management system. In moving forward, his goal is to start handing off responsibilities to the individual departments, provide access and then lock them down to only pages they would actually modify. Max provided an overview of the new website. One of the highlights was FAQ's will be provided when the website is launched. The goal is to reduce the administration of having a body answer a question. Minutes, audios and agendas will be organized by the event under government. None of this information has been inputted to the new website to date.

Karen Zakarian noted that the current website is extremely difficult with regard to navigating it. She would like to see ease of use with the new website.

Tom McGlone suggested that it would be good to have a user group that can look at the new website and provide feedback before it is launched. Max said that he would like to have user groups and testing, but it comes down to time constraints.

Max noted that the current website is a website of bullet lists and pdf downloads of word documents. There is no real content in the site itself. This whole entire project started as a facelift, a graphic design challenge solution. It was not until he began moving the text from the existing site into the new site, that it was realized how deficient the site was. Then it became the marketing and public relations that it should have been at the beginning.

Stan asked if the people who use the website are being utilized and are getting their critique of Max's interpretation of their submitted items. Toni thought that this would be a subsequent discussion about the processes that need to happen before going live and what the timeframe will look like.

The Committee was not aware that the "url" which had been previously given to them could still be used to access the new website.

Max noted that once a policy is established regarding social media and the website, the icons will be provided to tie into social media. He acknowledged that 95% of the existing content will be replicated into the new website.

Stan expressed concern about the lack of addressing the police site since it is not functional. The redesign Beach Patrol and Bandstand sites were not of an issue because they are both functional sites. The Convention Center is tended to be complete before going live with the City website.

City Manager Sharon Lynn noted that she was hearing a lot of frustration with regard to the rollout of the new website. If the Committee wants the website to rollout on August 1, 2014, she would need to mandate that Max spends the next 30 days doing the website; or money can be spent that was allocated in the budget to hire one individual (outside person) to work on the website the next 30 days. She was not sure how that play into this because there needs to be a training period. The City is at a point now where the website is being developed, but it is not known what the timeline will be for completion.

Toni Sharp said that there is one fundamental decision to be made of whether the site will be launched during the season or after the season is over. She suggested launching in the softer time of the year and try to make that an objective as opposed to launching the site during the season. Toni said that she cannot get a reasonable answer from anybody on what a reasonable launch date is.

Stan was concerned that the IT Department is spread too thin, and that is why the Committee made a recommendation for monies to go for website maintenance. And maybe it was an oversight to not request more money for a third person during budget sessions.

Sharon voiced concern of whether the deadline for the launch of the website will be met if a deadline date is set.

Janet Anderson thought another person is needed who will not require too much training to work on the new website. Typically any site has a user group who are new to it to walk through it and observe where there are problems, etc.

Stan summarized that the website is not as far along as he had expected. He was satisfied in moving forward that the website would be done sometime in the future without have a deadline date.

Toni had hoped that as part of the launch, there will be a user testing phase and to get that service from somebody.

Patrick noted that a website is never done. It needs to be constantly updated, with changes being made. With the frustration that Max is experiencing with timing of launching the website, the Commissioners and City Manager will need to look at this with regard to budgeting and staffing issues.

Max said that the IT Department does not need an additional technical person or webmaster, a public relations person is needed.

Sharon noted that the website is close to being launched. Someone is needed with skills for public relations. A new police department site is needed.

Max noted that the goal is get the City website up and running, and the police department site will be considered the phase. He would not be able to resolve the issues with the police department site in the context of the time he has had with working on the City website.

Continued discussion of optimizing communications with members of the public at meetings.

Members of the Committee had no comments regarding this topic.

NEW BUSINESS

Initial evaluation report on and discussion of ongoing Support Document Program which provides online accessibility to certain documents which support Board of Commissioners meeting agendas topics.

Stan noted that a memo dated January 24, 2014 which had been sent to the Board of Commissioners had been forwarded to the Committee prior to this meeting. This was to articulate and finalize the Support Document Program. It is noted in the memo that at some point after a 90 day period, the program would be evaluated. The Committee would look at certain things such as the time for topic sponsors to create the documents, time for City staff to receive documents, number of meetings, etc. This program started on January 17, 2014 at the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting. Since that time, there have been 13 meetings. Three support document packets with four topics were made available online. There was no additional time for the topic sponsor to create a support document because they would have been created for the meetings anyway. Ann Womack, City Secretary, noted that each packet took approximately 45 minutes to do which includes compiling all the information, combining it into one .pdf form, and posting the document online. The documents are sent to her as a .pdf so there is no difference in the time it takes to create the packets. Topics from various agendas were reviewed to see if they could have had supporting documents placed in the packets. The summary of this evaluation is that no extra time is consumed of the sponsor, and approximately 45 minutes is consumed of the City's staff time to put the packet together. Based upon have support documents for three of 13 meetings does not mean that every meeting could have had a support document package based on volunteer use, etc. The Committee could suggest promoting the program as a reminding to the Board of Commissioners. In the future when the new City website is rolled out, all the new programs will be touted and promote them.

Address the potential to expand the Support Document Program to other commissions, boards and committees.

Stan noted that in the memo dated January 24, 2014, the program is to only be used by the Board of Commissioners. The desire would be to open up this program to the rest of the boards, commissions and committees with a reminder that this is a voluntary program. Stan would like to have the program established for the Communications Committee meetings. The Committee's recommendation was to ask the City Manager to authorize the support document packages to be compiled and put online for all the boards, commissions and committees, and for the City Secretary to compile the documents.

Discuss expanding the webpage "Ongoing Business of the Commissioners" to include reports to the Commissioners from other commissions, committees and boards, and discuss other methodology to include commission, committee and board documents online, e.g. by inclusion of "Ongoing Business" links for individual committees.

Stan noted that the thought is to allow all other commissions, committees and boards to post their "Ongoing Business" information online on their pages so it is available to the public. Another concept would be to have reports to the Board of Commissioners placed online such as committee reports, Planning Commission reports, etc. The consensus of the Committee was for the City Manager to look into additional opportunities for the individual commissions, boards and committees to post their individual documents online for public access.

DISCUSS AND PRIORITIZE ITEMS TO INCLUDE ON FUTURE AGENDAS.

There were none.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting has been scheduled for July 25, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the February 28, 2014 and April 25, 2014 Communications Committee Meetings were distributed prior to the meeting.

Jimmy Horty made a motion, seconded by Toni Sharp, to approve the February 28, 2014 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Jimmy Horty made a motion, seconded by Toni Sharp, to approve the April 25, 2014 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENT

There was none.

There being no further business, Chairman Mills adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
OCTOBER 24, 2014**

(Stan Mills, Chairman)