Approved Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2012

A meeting of the Communications Committee of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 1:40 p.m. by Chair Commissioner Stan Mills on Monday, July 9, 2012 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

ROLL CALL.

Present: Commissioner Stan Mills, Chair
                  Commissioner Lorraine Zellers
                  Janet Anderson
                  Hoyte Decker

There were no audience members present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
The agenda was approved noting some items may be taken out of sequence.

CORRESPONDENCE
The only correspondence was the internal distribution of support documents which are listed within Support Document #1.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Minutes of the committee meeting held on June 15, 2012 were distributed prior to the meeting; the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

6A. Report on seeking approval of Board of Commissioners to revise committee mission statement.
Chair Mills reported on seeking Board of Commissioners' approval of Communications Committee change of mission statement. The BOC neither approved or disapproved – they gave all committees carte blanche to determine their own paths subject to annual review by BOC.

6B. Confirmation of revised Committee policy to review the City website.
All members approved of the most recent policy amendments.

6C. Continued discussion on draft ideas for overall communications plan.
Chair envisions a comprehensive communications plan but asked do we want to go that direction, i.e. make a complete package to present to BOC?
Member Decker suggested we complete our review of each item – then we have a full manual allowing for the committee to be prepared to offer each topic fully. The consensus was we should complete our homework to create a record of committee recommendations for optimizing communications utilizing a systematic approach; start with introduction and overview of what we want to do and introduce topics (with supporting rationale).

6C1. Accessibility of Commissioners' agenda related documents via printed materials or the City website. There was some discussion on the need to reiterate adopted practices/policies to the Board of Commissioners and, relative to the policy on how to format documents, to give electronic templates with instructions so they don't think they have to create everything from scratch. A future agenda item could be developing a communication model for orientation for new commissioners.

6C1a. Policy which provides that available supporting documents relevant to agenda items are available to City officials and the public in advance of a meeting.
Discussion revolved around questions:
Is there a better descriptor? Response - Supporting Documents is fine.
How do we define support documents as different from communications/items that would be censored from posting online? Partial response - Nothing with email addresses or redact email addresses to maintain privacy.
Do we let individual determine what constitutes a support document?
Are introductory documents included? ("Introductory documents" references the first presentation of a new topic). Presentations might be excluded at discretion of authors.
Do we need to identify the legality of FOIA implications of correspondence?
Is including correspondence appropriate ? Except for member Decker no one agrees to include correspondence as a support document; while correspondence may offer an opinion on a topic it should not be a component of a supporting document.
What is the intent of the use of supporting documents? …to help the public understand a topic, to be more knowledgeable to formulate opinions. Documents which support agenda items so they can be made avail to public at same time as the agenda is posted to the extent feasible.

It was reiterated that the proposed support document policy was to be specific to the Board of Commissioners for now and when proved successful to then consider expansion to other committees.

Chair Mills suggested there are two types of introductory presentations: an introductory topic that comes back to a workshop for additional discussion/action versus an agenda item introduced and voted on in the same meeting. The second type of agenda item (introduced and acted on in the same meeting) is a separate topic that, in the chair's opinion should integrate with a first reading/second reading program to give minimum timelines for introduction of a topic and then taking action on it.

Member Anderson suggested that a timeline needs to be established first, to work policy from little to big. By example consider establishing that something cannot be voted on at a meeting unless it is introduced at a previous meeting and affording a minimum notice of 7 days. Apply concept of support document to a timeline. Introduce topic; that introduction becomes the support document for a subsequent meeting – you work off of that.
If a Commissioner has something they want to contribute to the discussion and distribute, then it, too, can become a supporting document

Back to identifying types of documents that fall within support documents:
- New ordinances
- Amendments to existing ordinances
- Bid documents/recommendations of awards

Member Anderson asked if there is a procedure for adopting ordinances in a timely fashion in Rehoboth? "No." Member Zellers pointed out that Bethany Beach has such an ordinance. Member Anderson suggested incorporating a timeline in any templates and that we consider the use of pre-made forms to facilitate ease of use.

It was reiterated that the support document policy would be voluntary (recommended, not mandatory).

Next steps are to refine proposed policy before considering making a presentation on topic to the Board of Commissioners.
Define support document (Member Anderson – broad definitions: data you bring to the decision making process. Reasoning: per dictionary.com – "to provide backup and depth to agreed upon or discussed items."
Explanation of the support document process
Identify types of support documents

Chair Mills suggested this policy has to be adopted in conjunction with adoption of a first reading program (not incorporating it in the policy).

Chair Mills will send everyone the formatting template

6C1b. Better utilization of the City website.
Member Decker indicated frustration with no Home page news information noting changes in refuse pickup for July 4 weekend.
Chair Mills said he has been working to get the city manager to utilize this feature but if unsuccessful then Member Decker will draft a memo for discussion at the next meeting.

6C2. Clarity of language used to describe agenda items.
(Skipped because of time constraints.)
6C3. Clarity of agenda language suggesting when the public is allowed to speak.
(Skipped because of time constraints.)

6C4. Document identification/formatting policy and potential addendums relative to specific document types to analyze the impacts of proposals.
Member Decker's form was reintroduced. Member Anderson was tasked with drafting a generic form that could be used by any Commissioner (or committee member) to propose an item to be included in an agenda.

6C5. Policy suggesting timelines between initiating an agenda topic and acting on same.
Member Anderson suggested pursuit of a policy establishing a timeline for adoption of ordinances (such as a first reading/second reading program adopted by Bethany Beach.   "No ordinance shall be adopted before…." Member Zellers was tasked with developing a proposal for discussion at a future meeting.

6C6. Communications enhancements during meetings.
(Skipped because of time constraints.)

6C7. Communications enhancements utilizing the City website.
(Skipped because of time constraints.)

6D. Update on hiring of additional person in IT Department.

Max Hamby – on board in IT Department – 4 days/week. 32 hours/week for now. Multi-tasks of the IT Dept but one task is to study web site and get familiarity so he can make suggestions and work with us in the future.

7. New Business
No new business was discussed.

8. Discuss and prioritize items for future agendas.
No new items were brought forward.

9. Set next meeting.
The next meeting date is to be determined; sometime after August and after sufficient time to do homework.

10. Public Comment
There was no public comment.

11. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.