

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

August 22, 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, August 22, 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, Lorraine Zellers, Janet Anderson

Also Present: Sharon Lynn (City Manager)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda, as amended with the deletion of the June 27, 2014 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes, was unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were available for approval.

OLD BUSINESS

Report on status of website overhaul by and discussion with City Manager Sharon Lynn.

Stan noted that at some of the last meetings, the Committee learned that no more formal committee input is desired. The Beach Patrol and Bandstand websites are to be worked on toward the end of 2014. Currently, the Convention Center website is being worked on. The Police Department website is lowest on the priority list. The new City website is to go online incrementally. At the last meeting, no timeline was offered for the City website to go live. Karen Falk, copywriter, was to meet with Department Heads to review each department's newly designed webpages and solicit feedback. The link to the development site has been made available to the Committee for review and comments. The Communications Committee was first tasked approximately 2½ years ago with overhauling the website, and over a period of one year had developed a guidebook. Stan provided a brief history of the current website's host and responsibilities. The website was handed over to Max Hamby when he became IT Supervisor, and he determined the direction of the website. At that time, the Committee lost all control and oversight of the website. The original process to choose Delaware.net was through a RFP process. With the new website, Inclind was the chosen developer by Max. In the first RFP process, the Committee did the interviewing, hiring and had the contractor look through and critique it and made changes. In the current process, Inclind has only set the foundation of part of the program, and someone in-house would be transferring all of the data and documents.

Janet Anderson added that it was not clear to the Committee at the point when Inclind was hired what the parameters of it's contract would include.

City Manager Sharon Lynn provided an update on the City website. Inclind was hired to develop the look of the website that the Committee wanted, not to complete it with layers and content, etc. Max took it upon himself to work with Inclind, but he was not able to complete this project in a timely fashion. The website has progressed, but it is not ready to be launched. The quest to address multiple concerns the Committee has had with the existing website was centered around building a better experience for the public was to address the aged design, navigational issues, layout restrictions of the old website. What she and Max started to do in the latter part of June, was to create a RFP to take the website out of the limits of what Max is able to do. Three entities were interviewed. Karen Falk has developed the content. Currently, the content is being put into the website through the Drupal platform which was created by Inclind. Sharon provided a preview of the new website which is 85-90% complete. Content has been moved over from the old site. The intent for the forms is for most of them to be fillable. Floor plans have been provided on the website for the Convention Center. The content that Karen created can be loaded onto the website and used. The RFP that was sent out addressed three areas: 1. Integrating the new and existing content. 2. Defining and standardizing a layout. 3. Creating interactive maps. Max provided Beau Jackett, IT Director of Provincetown, the rights to get into the website with the Drupal format. Beau had presented a proposal to the City. He had thought the best approach would be to phase in the next steps for the scope of work, first working with the content.

He's looking at a three week time period to work independently on this website. His cost would be \$75.00 per hour at 10 hours per week. The next approach would be to have the interactive maps. Sharon has taken control of the website. She clarified that starting on August 25, 2014, it would take three weeks for content and an additional three weeks for everything else. At the end of the six to eight week timeframe, the website will be ready to be launched provided that additional tweaks are not needed. Beau will be communicating with Max throughout the process, and Sharon will be overseeing what they're doing several times a week. Max is committed to integrating any new information. Ann Womack, City Secretary, also does a very generous portion of that work because most of what is updated are the minutes, agendas, announcements, etc. It will be up to the Committee if it would like to have a pre-launch test period. A press release would characterize the website's new look, easier navigation, better experience for the end user to access the City without coming into City Hall, filling out forms, etc.

Stan thought that the press release should tout a functional search feature, fillable forms in an organized fashion and a lot of the elements that are in the guidebook, which should be provided to Beau. He recommended that someone should proofread the website and also see where there are omissions. It would be in the purview of the City Manager as to when the website will be launched.

Sharon noted that Beau will be contacting Ann Womack for what she sees that's necessary for the website. Beau will provide the Committee's guidebook as a reference. Sharon will provide a more in depth status report on the website at the next meeting along with more details about what the recommendations are around user testing. The Police Department's website is currently being worked on. A RFP is ready to be sent out. Currently, it is not known whether to go with something easier developed and then link the Police Department in the current website, or use this platform. Police Chief Banks would like have the Police Department be part of the City website using the Drupal platform. Sharon did not think that Beau would have the time to take on the Police Department website in the time period that it is needed to be done. With regard to the City website, someone in each department should look at their own page and provide feedback. The following will be addressed at a future meeting: 1. Launching a survey from the website to residents. 2. Streaming meetings. 3. A solid social media strategy for the City. A Facebook page would be more for informational purposes.

Review status of Committee recommendations to City Manager including but not limited to:

Implementation of a program for the City to issue "Welcome" letters to residential property owners and to business owners.

Toni Sharp distributed packets for the Committee and provided a status report on the program for welcome packets to residential property owners. A welcome letter from the City Manager, city newsletter, courtesy notice, breath of fresh air – smoke-free areas information, parking & walking guide, bicycle friendly street guide, guide to rules and regulations for bicycles, bikeatthebeach.com from DelDOT, two magnets regarding recycling, rack card from the Rehoboth Beach Museum and the Bandstand information are included in the packet. Information on rain gardens will be provided in the packets as soon as it is available from the Center for Inland Bays. Toni chose not to provide the newsletter from the Cape Henlopen Senior Center in the packet because there has been negativity around the center of late. Toni recommended that this program be implemented immediately. She has packets ready to be dropped off at the Main Street office and put in the realtor bags for in-town sales of new residential properties. Toni will be working with Sharon on this program. She hoped that in the near future, these packets would be sent out from the City itself. Toni will report back to the Committee in a few months as to the progress of the program.

Lorraine Zellers had distributed a welcome letter to businesses to the Committee for its review. The letter provides emergency contact information and links to the City website. She had met with Terri Sullivan in Building & Licensing who recommended that the welcome letter is not sent out until after the business license certificate is mailed. Sharon had made a few tweaks to the letter, and implementation of this program will be left up to her as to when the program will begin. Janette Clavette in the administrative office will send out the welcome letter when she sends out the business license certificates.

Kathy McGuinness suggested that Main Street could be utilized to deliver the welcome letter and other pertinent information to businesses. Lorraine will contact Krys Johnson of Main Street to discuss this further and follow-up with Sharon.

Expansion of online accessibility to commission, committee and board documents.

Stan noted that in his memorandum on behalf of the Committee, dated July 1, 2014, to the City Manager, it was articulated that the Committee is in support of everything listed on page 7 of the support document packet. Considerations were: 1. Use a bulletin board to show B&L Report, Permit of Compliance drawings, Board of

Adjustment site plans and same for Planning Commission. 2. Promote use of more handouts, ongoing business, support document packets and powerpoint presentations/projector. 3. Have laptop onsite with remote. 4. Have better audio quality. 5. Use of smart board and have wi-fi for guests. 6. Possibly, in the future, the City Secretary would be the steward of the laptop to load presentations, and the Commissioners would use a remote. Also noted from the Committee's meeting on June 27, 2014 were the following topics: 1. Consider expanding the Support Document Program in other commissions, boards and committees. 2. Consider expanding the webpage "Ongoing Business of the Commissioners" to include reports to the Commissioners from other commissions, boards and committees. 3. Consider inclusion of "Ongoing Business" links for individual committees, commissions and boards. Stan noted that he would like to encourage the City Manager to implement these topics and give her justification if someone questions her. He would like to provide a Committee report to the Commissioners in September at their regular meeting on the analyses of the support document program and further report on the welcome letters and any of these recommendations that the City Manager chooses to implement.

Jimmy Horty made a motion, seconded by Lorraine Zellers, to move to accept the list as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss updating the Committee mission statement.

Stan recommended an update to the Committee mission statement. He recommended that "[T]he Communications Committee examines issues related to the communications between the City of Rehoboth Beach and its residents and property owners. The Committee was formed to ensure that property owners are kept informed of important issues that face the City of Rehoboth Beach. In particular, the Committee is continually working to refine the City's website as one of the main portals of communications with its residents and property owners" should be updated to "[T]he Communications Committee makes recommendations on optimizing two-way communications between City government and its residents, property owners, business owners and the public through utilization of varied media sources including but not limited to City newsletters, the City website and the City email system. In particular, the Committee is continually working to maintain the City's website as one of the main portals of communications."

Janet agreed with the principle of the rewrite, but thought the wordsmithing should be worked on such as "...optimizing two-way communications" should be changed to "...improve communication". "[M]aintain the City's website" should be changed to "...reevaluate the City's website." Janet and Jimmy will work on the wordsmithing and forward it to Stan. Any further comments from Committee members should be forwarded to Janet and Jimmy for their review. The updated draft will be forwarded to the Committee prior to the next meeting. A vote will be taken at that meeting to make the changes to the mission statement.

DISCUSS AND PRIORITIZE ITEMS TO INCLUDE ON FUTURE AGENDAS.

An item to be included on the next agenda is the potential of a survey to property owners asking them simple questions about their priorities on communication.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENT

There was none.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Mills adjourned the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
OCTOBER 24, 2014**

Respectfully submitted,

(Stan Mills, Chairman)

(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)