

City of Rehoboth Beach
Communications Committee

APPROVED Minutes of October 6, 2010 meeting

The City of Rehoboth Beach Communications Committee held a meeting on October 6, 2010, at 10:30 a.m. in the Commissioner's Room at City Hall.

Roll Call:

Committee present: Commissioner Pat Coluzzi, Chair
 Dottie Cirelli
 Hoyte Decker
 Dave Henderson, City IT Department
 Commissioner Stan Mills

Others present: Willie Merchant, City IT Department
 Dick Cleaveland
 John McGowen, Delaware.net

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Pat Coluzzi, Chair.

A quorum of the committee was present.

The minutes of the Communications Committee meeting of September 13, 2010 were approved unanimously.

The order of business was rearranged awaiting arrival of Delaware.net to participate in the meeting.

New Business 4C. "Review draft policy for Communications Committee quarterly review of website." Handed out in meeting.

The policy charges the Communications Committee with the responsibility of reviewing the website for updates on a quarterly basis. Policy was approved unanimously as an internal policy for this committee.

(John arrived.)

"Discussion of website deficiencies with Delaware.net"

John introduced new features for web sites being offered by Delaware.net through presentations of other municipal web sites, e.g. Dover and Harrington. One new feature was the use of multiple themes within a website.

John noted that there were many new features already added that many do not know about. This led to a committee concern that automatic changes were being made to the City website without the knowledge of City personnel- especially troublesome as no notice is given nor are instructions available on how to use the new features. Delaware.net is and will continue sending emails to inform of new features; also, the website includes a new online help/instruction program. Committee comment included that making changes less frequent and accompanying changes with instructions would be helpful.

Identification of and discussion of website deficiencies.

- Regarding implementation of the email bulletin program:
 - There are approximately 200 persons in the system/signed up.
 - Test messages have been sent - all were received okay.
 - Waiting for a mass mailing to go out [for first official email.]
 - Already given go ahead-minutes say Ann will start.
 - Pat was to get authorization from Greg
 - To finish task- get disclaimers in there, change to only require email address, first name and last name for signups.
 - Delaware.net given a list of changes to be implemented some time ago from Dave.
- Pat expressed frustration that she cannot go into Communications Committee page because of changes [and not knowing how to utilize changes.]

Delaware.net has implemented a new help system available to all users to address that concern.

It was suggested that communications between Delaware.net and the IT Department be copied to Pat as committee chair.

Deficiencies in website were identified:

- Sign up page.

To be completed including disclaimers.

Change information on home page: "Want to stay informed? Sign up for E-News."

John suggests another graphic placed elsewhere that links to sign up page.

On each email transmitted, a message "You are subscribed to receive official city of Rehoboth beach E-news. Should you be receiving this in error please click on unsubscribe."

- Opening documents is by way of dialog box which requires the user to select “open” or “save.” This is an extra step – it is desired for document to open automatically when clicked on. On the committee “calendar events” page is listed meeting date and agenda. It is desired to have all information specific to a meeting on this page, such information being agenda, minutes, audio, supporting documents. Currently to retrieve anything other than a meeting agenda, the user has to click on the meeting to go to another page. This is an extra step desired to be eliminated perceived as a redundancy. Also, “when a user sees only “agenda” on first page, it gives the misperception that no other documents/audio are yet uploaded.”

Responses to this concern from Delaware.net and the IT Department included that 1) A user can control this by making setting changes on their personal computer to open automatically or as desired; 2) “It’s the way Adobe works for now.” 3) “We have to do that because of using FTP to another file server on their system and create a link to get to the audio as the audio files are so large – thus has to be done that way.”

John suggested an alternative, that everything can be on second page. Only use date and name of meeting on first page, click on name of meeting and then find all links (agendas, minutes, audio, etc) on second page.

- Meeting calendar sequencing was questioned. Why start with most recent/current and then go backwards? Suggestion: Start with most recent and go to oldest-ie reverse chronological order.
- Convention Hall page. Remove internal schedule -for now say “under construction” until we get information from Karen Z [convention event marketer.] Change to “Convention Center” not “Convention Hall Schedule.”
- Restrooms. Change to see Google map with Google balloon with address/location with hours.
John suggests one map/interactive Google map with pushpins. Can have individual maps for restrooms, parks, parking, etc.

Changes desired: 1) Add restrooms and parks google maps with pins; and 2) look at converting current FAQs to new FAQ system. (*Verify nomenclature –Stan*)

- Rehoboth in the News. Question: is there an automatic feed to use for that or is it going to be too much information? Stan believes it will need to be personally managed and that the purpose of this category is to market Rehoboth Beach, articles are to have a positive spin on them. Consensus is to step back from it for now.
- Dottie suggested we need to enhance the users ability to fill out forms online and submit them online. E.g. Job applications. Building Permits. What does this take?

John says you use PDFs with fillable fields by using a licensed version of Acrobat to make form with fillable boxes.

Question posed was “who does this?” The committee could make recommendations to B&L or other department as to what forms should be available online.

- Dottie questioned a redundancy in city services – information. This was acted on in meeting.
- Hoyte desires easier access to what happened at a specific recent meeting- hard to remember how to get there- go to city government? Or go to city services? Or go to?

John suggested the use of icon or “calendar” or “most recent events” in left column.

- Hoyte – sign up for newsletter –on every page. Calendar (?) box on every page.

Hoyte suggested that as a protocol for reviewing website every three months, he suggested that John periodically provide links to his newest web sites of other municipalities and including new features.

- Dottie expressed the desire to be able to search for words in documents, such as by key word.

John-suggested there is one option but- words have to be manually tagged within each document. He also will look into use of Google search

Agenda Item 4B “Discuss possibilities of website maintenance by Delaware.net”

The committee desires a proposal from Delaware.net for future potential maintenance and to deigns/implement possible enhancements.

John noted a new capabilities of Delaware.net:

- The ability to remote into computers- click on “I need help” and immediately Delaware.net sees your screen. Fixing things remotely can realize a savings on trips to site.
- The ability for the committee to upload changes desired directly to Delaware.net and this automatically creates a work ticket. No calls are required. Includes attachments of files for uploading.

Dave believes the web site is getting stale. His idea is that once a month there is a change, something to draw an eye to a particular area of the website. He wants to use analytics to see pages not being viewed to then target those pages for upgrades to draw in site visits. E.g change background, newer slide show, etc are easy changes to keep from keeping stale.

Regarding the moving photos at top, Stan suggested using these photos for marketing Rehoboth activities such as Sea Witch; Farmers Market etc. Suggested to market things in the future rather than past activities.

Future agenda items?

- Maintenance agreement.
- Supporting documents – Hoyte
- John will put a bar with quick links on the bottom and research search capabilities.

Stan to meet with Dave and John after this meeting for E-News information needed- e.g language for disclaimers etc. John noted he has disclaimer policy types from other cities in three categories: 1) Acceptable use; 2) waiver on content may change and not be accurate; and 3) privacy. He will forward them to us.

Next meeting tentatively 10:30 a.m. on November 17, 2010.

Meeting adjourned at noon.