

## APPROVED Minutes of the Communications Committee

The City of Rehoboth Beach Communications Committee held a meeting on November 17, 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

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 the October 6, 2010 meeting are not yet ready.

## New Business 4a. "Discuss possibilities of website maintenance by Delaware.net"

At the request of the Communications Committee, Delaware.net provided the committee with a maintenance contract. There was substantial discussion which included items such as:

- Was a fixed fee and a specified number of maintenance hours allotted sufficient or too much?
- Was hourly fee reasonable?
- Was it more appropriate to include a maximum yearly number of hours and would unused hours rollover?
- Was phone support for [all] city staff appropriate? Dave wants all support to go through the IT Department with oversight by and discretion of IT Department to authorize other staff to talk directly with Delaware.net. I.e IT Department as "gatekeeper" of support from Delaware.net.
- Hoyte suggested that the City Manger should have knowledge of this proposal and costs.
- It was suggested that it would be beneficial to look at the work load in terms of maintenance versus new enhancements. Suggest developing a a list of what upgrading the website means: posting of weekly agendas (no), putting on supporting documents (no); enhancements (yes).

Dave is to review proposal with Delaware. Net and solicit an amended proposal to reflect committee desires, including:

- Phone support through the IT Department.
- Rollover hours.
- Enhancements or any other tasks as directed by IT Department, e.g. could include training sessions etc.

New Business 4B “Discuss proposed policy for supporting documents.”

Hoyte conducted a review of the Board of Commissioners’ workshop on July 2010 regarding reaction to the Communication Committee’s recommendation to consider a policy on use of support documents. Hoyte identified reactions by the Mayor and individual commissioners. (Comments were not endorsed wholesale but largely representative of the individual respondents). Such comments included:

- It would be a tremendous burden placed on volunteers who serve community- time consuming and another step for administration.
- It would require hiring help to administer.
- “This is a burden without benefit.”
- “What is problem we are addressing [by implementing such a policy?] Has there been a problem?”
- There are two issues – 1) getting information to committees or commissioners and 2) getting information to the public.
- “I don’t know if we should get information out to public a week before as they will come to meetings hellbent on fighting it.”
- We[Commissioners] should get feedback on this proposal from other committees and commissions
- “If we don’t make deadline is it off agenda?”
- If implemented, this should not be done by just anybody – need gateway or official.
- “Who is going to do it [put it online?] “Do you think *anybody* should be able to post it — It should be clear who is posting it, that it is their position and does not reflect the Board of Commissioners.” “Don’t want the public to misinterpret that the whole BOC is doing this.”
- What is our web site policy?
- Can see benefit the of drafts [being available ahead of time,] not sure of workshop items.

Hoyte suggested the committee needed to address each concern. Some responses to the above comments were made by individual Communications Committee members (some endorsed by the whole committee, some silent on endorsement):

- The policy would benefit both the commissioners and the public.
- The policy says we would recognize there are times when it is not possible to have supporting documents available ahead of time.
- It is the responsibility of author of agenda item to provide relevant supporting document.

- Who is responsible for the posting on the web site? City secretary as gatekeeper. While much information will be available in electronic form, much information will not and has to be made available somewhere – likely in B&L Department and so likely best for Ann to be gatekeeper. One person needs to be responsible for efficiency; one person to screen everything that goes onto the website.
- Formatting and disclaimers can address concerns about who authors and who supports or not the issue.
- If you want the public to come and comment you need to provide them enough information to react to
- Legitimacy in allowing BOC first blush before going out full bore to the public.
- Need to review web site policy. It might need tweaking – not clear who is doing this and maybe we need to make it clearer.
- Resolve who is responsible - a gatekeeper - to minimize negativity.
- It is a discipline - if not disciplined then you are not going to be in favor of it; if disciplined or willing to be disciplined then that changes the complexion of this topic.
- Our committee needs to be disciplined and start using supporting documents when issuing agenda items. Create the model.

Hoyte going to draft a summary of commissioner concerns and committee reactions to each. He suggested as a next step to analyze a planning commission memo on the subject and approach some other committees/commissions to gain their feedback. If concerns are valid then maybe we step back – but he has yet to find valid arguments against [that can't be addressed]. Hoyte is to get in touch with Pal Littleton, Planning Commission Chair.

Future agenda items identified were:

- Further discussion of maintenance contract with Delaware.net
- Agenda formatting and associated topics including when citizenry is allowed to talk, e.g. noticing the additional citizen comment during workshops; use of synopsizes, etc.
- Supporting Documents policy.

Reminder to committee members to provide appropriate information about agenda items a week prior [as supporting documents]. E.g. Delaware.net communications needed to know before continuing discussion.

Reminder on action item: Get Enews going.

Next meeting to be determined. 1<sup>st</sup> choice: Dec 9 @10:30 2<sup>nd</sup> choice: December 3 @10:30

Adjourned 11:40