Minutes of the Communications Committee
December 19, 2011

The City of Rehoboth Beach <u>Communications</u> <u>Committee</u> held a meeting on December 19, 2011, at 1:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Room at City Hall.

1. Call to Order: Meeting started at 2:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: Attending members: Stan Mills, Chair; Dottie Cirelli, Hoyte Decker, and Janet Anderson,. Public: Dick Cleaveland, Dewey Beach Webmaster.

3. Welcome: The Chair welcomed new members Lorraine Zellers (absent) and Janet Anderson.

4. Approval of Agenda: Approved by consensus.

5. Correspondence:
    (1) Tom McGlone requests web page for "large and diverse gay community." Acknowledged by email; to be considered at future meeting.
    (2) Dick Cleaveland desires to comment on "Google Analytics" agenda item. Acknowledged and addressed, see below.

6. Approval of Minutes: August 25, 2011 and November 15, 2011; approved by consensus.

7. Review of Committee Mission Statement and history of Committee Issues: The Chair clarified that the Committee does not author City communications, e.g., City Emails. The Committee reviews the website, works on Communications methodology, and makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Member Anderson raised the issue of scope of recipients: the provision identifies residents and property owners;   it was suggested that the business community was omitted and should be included. The Chair said he will review these issues and research the original Mission Statement in the Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes. This will be on the agenda again for consideration of recommending changes.

8. Old Business:

A. Website changes: On the "Visitor Information" page the Committee decided to remove four pictures and replace them with text displayed elsewhere. It was decided that "Rehoboth Beach in the News" would be re-inserted in the Left-hand Navigation Bar. Web links [which tend to subject to removal by the source] will be replaced with pdf versions of the content to ensure availability of the information. "City Meeting Schedule and Records:"   Submitted to Delaware.net to facilitate the changes.

B. Additional recommendations for website:

1. *Facilitating access to and submittal of forms online* – Member Cirelli presented her report and submitted a four page draft proposal, attached, for this agenda item. She indicated that all the forms she found were available online. She noted that City forms are not uniform but the City should consider this action. Also, some forms lend themselves to an electronic, pdf version that could be competed online. They include: application for committee appointment, tree permit, job application, and rental of Convention Center [including payment options]. New forms could be created for a request for special pick-up, use permit for Grove Park, and weddings on the beach.

Member Anderson asked whether or not forms are at one place on the website? When told no, she suggested that could be done with a brief synopsis for each form. She commented that many users would not be familiar with departmental responsibility for particular forms and placing them on one page would simplify users' searches.

The Chair said the online forms could be in three formats: (1) print only, (2) forms that could be completed online, and (3) forms that could be completed and submitted online. To the last the Chair said Dave Henderson, IT Department, has indicated the process would be an easy addition to the process. The Chair also identified forms with payment options, using e-commerce programs. He requested Member Cirelli to consider researching which forms would be adaptable to the different interactive levels and their appropriateness, accountability, usefulness, and cost effectiveness.

2. *Enhancing the current "Search" function* – A request has been sent to Delaware.Net on this matter. Results may be available by next meeting.

3. *Implementing new Google maps* – This matter is ongoing; the Chair and Member Cirelli continue to work on it. Modeling will be based on Dewey Beach system.

4. *Facilitating a bulletin board for alert-type messages* – This was used during Hurricane Irene. It could be used for emergency and short-notice situations, like meeting cancellations. The IT Department has indicated this is an easy change. Member Decker suggested that there should also be a "News Flash" feature lower on the home page for non-emergency, newsworthy topics. The Chair asked the members to look at other municipal websites and report back with samples and ideas for both issues at the next meeting. As an aside Member Anderson commented on Home Page "clutter." Member Decker agreed, but pointed out that the emphasis—for now—should be on completing the current task. The Committee will consider options for a "Facelift" later.

5. *Other* – "Suggest an Event." The Chair questions the usefulness of this calendar-related web section. Various Calendar Headers will be placed on a future meeting agenda. The Chair referred to an array of miscellaneous web features, some of which could be eliminated—others could be manipulated; they will be considered at future meetings. This is a list of the topics covered –

> Home Page (Left Side Navigation): Official Public Notices, Employment Opportunities, Do Business in Rehoboth Beach [Member Decker is addressing this issue], About the City of Rehoboth Beach, Contact & Questions [Chair will meet with IT Department to clarify this process], E-News [this process will be evaluated in the future], Weather Report; Visitor Information: Parking Information [the City is revamping its parking/walking map], Beach & Boardwalk Information, Bandstand; City Administration: [Audio Policy font too large], City Boards/Commissions/Committees, City Government Budget, Elections; City Services: City Government Departments, City Manager/Administration.

C. Report on meeting with representatives of the Convention Center: The Chair and member Decker met with Chuck Snyder and Karen Zakarian on November 5, 2011. Ms. Zakarian (event coordinator) was very receptive to our offer of help. She will provide material and information that can be used to flesh out the Convention Center web section. The IT Department is amenable to this arrangement.

D. Follow up on Committee Recommendations to Budget for Maintaining Website: At the November 18, 2011 Board of Commissioners meeting the Chair provided the following report –

Commissioner Mills, Communications Committee, reported that a meeting was held on November 15, 2011. The Committee is continuing to review the City website and making recommendations on changes such as designing new Google maps for locations of restrooms, City buildings, etc.; investigating an enhanced "search" function to not only search the web pages but to allow searches for key words within documents; and evaluating how to enhance the ability to put more forms online and submit same online. The Committee recommended augmenting the current budget category that includes website hosting and maintenance by an additional amount in order to facilitate the hiring of a part-time webmaster. The webmaster would be experienced in web design and capable of implementing approved changes to the City website, and would attend Committee meetings, provide advice on functionality of website changes being contemplated by the Committee and then implement the changes. Having a part- time webmaster on board would provide for timelier implementation of web changes and give time relief to the IT Department as well as act as a consultant to the Committee. The Committee desires additional funds in the upcoming budget to hire such a consultant.

The chair reported while he did not get a definitive "no" he did not feel receptivity with the IT Department or the City Manager. The Commissioners did not express opinions either way. Members Decker and Cirelli urged the Chair to express the Committee's concerns about the need for funding to cover web maintenance to be performed independently of the IT Department at the upcoming Budget meetings. The Chair views it as a "control" issue. The Chair will speak to the City Manager about the matter and the committee will discuss it further before the Budget meetings. Member Anderson suggested use of term webmaster may have been seen as threatening as webmaster implies a certain level of control; rather we might term the position desired as a part-time designated web helper or maintenance person.

9. New Business

A. Introduction to Google Analytics: The IT Department identified the top four questions [in order] submitted in emails by users seeking information on:
   1. Weddings on the beach.
   2. Dogs on the beach and boardwalk.
   3. Bicycles on the boardwalk and rules.
   4. Trash and recycling.

The Chair went on to discuss a variety of uses that can be made of Google Analytics data. He said the Chamber and Dewey are two organizations that employ the system. Dick Cleaveland, Dewey's web official, offered his thoughts on the matter, saying it's useful, if you intend to do follow up with the data it provides. This was intended as an introduction to Google Analytics only; if someone wants to learn more they can meet with Dave Henderson of the IT Department.

10. Discuss and prioritize items for future agendas.

The Chair asked, where does the Committee want to go from here? He then identified a number of issues the Committee has considered in the past and may warrant consideration in the future. He was seeking assistance by individual Committee members to address the matters ["champion them"] and bring them to the Committee for action. They included –

1. Web:
    Ongoing issues:
    Forms – Member Cirelli
    Google maps – Member Cirelli and Chair
    Convention Hall information – Member Decker and Chair
    Bulletin Board
    Contact & Questions
    Calendar listing header: Suggest Event; Search; listing methods Business Listings – Member Cirelli
    Enews Evaluation
    Web page for "large and diverse gay community" (Tom McGlone request)

2. Master list of web issues yet addressed, generated by individual committee members:
    Proceed without committee input (e.g. broken links, etc);
    Items awaiting a champion to bring forward.
    Do Business in Rehoboth Beach – Member Decker
    Photo array on home page managed for marketing the city

3. Non-web issues:
    Support document policy.
    Agenda formatting: Use of synopses. (Member Cirelli offered to review)
    Agenda formatting: Clarify when the public is allowed to speak.

Items for the next meeting could include: Forms (Member Cirelli), Google Maps, Bulletin Board, Contacts & Questions (status report), Calendar Listings, Business Listings (Member Cirelli), Photo Array (Member Anderson offered to review).

11. Set next meeting: Monday, January 16, 2012, 2:00 pm.

12. Public Comment: None

13. Adjournment: 4:02 pm.

Minutes approved at the Communications Committee Meeting of February 10, 2012