# COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
# CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH

## January 24, 2014

The Communications Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 9:08 a.m. by Chairman Stan Mills on Friday, January 24, 2014 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

## ROLL CALL

Present:          Chairman Stan Mills, Toni Sharp, Lorraine Zellers, Jimmy Horty III

Absent:           Janet Anderson

Also Present:     Max Hamby (IT Director), Sharon Lynn (City Manager)

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda, as amended with the deletion of the December 6, 2013 Minutes, was unanimously approved.

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the December 6, 2013 Communications Committee Meeting were not available for approval.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Review of the Committee's mission and past actions.

Version No. 2 of the Support Document Packets were distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting

Stan reviewed updates to the Committee's mission. The Committee was formed to optimize two-way communications between the City, Commissioners and the public-at-large. The mission was revised to delete the statement that the Committee was formed to ensure that property owners are kept informed of important issues that face the City of Rehoboth Beach. Phone calls have been received that people are expecting letters, reports, emails and summaries of the meetings from the Committee to keep them informed. Another change was to when the Committee meets and the location of the meetings. There were no objections from the Committee members. Stan will submit these changes to be updated on the Committee's webpage. Stan provided a brief overview of the Committee's mission, accomplishments and recommendations.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Report on the initiation of an online Support Documents Program to access documents which support Commissioner agenda topics.

Stan reported that the first packet was developed and put online for the January 17, 2014 Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting. At the previous Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting, the guidelines were presented on how use and implement the program. A draft memo dated January 21, 2014 was provided to the Board of Commissioners with the guidelines that reflects comments from the last Board's meeting. This memo was provided in the Committee's packet. The memorandum reflects a further evaluation to be conducted by the Committee including review of the frequency of accessing online support documents. After the Committee completes its evaluations and reports to the Commissioners, the Board may choose to further evaluate the program. Minor changes to the guidelines were reflective of the comments from the Board of Commissioners and discussion with Ann Womack, City Secretary, who is the administrator of the Support Document Program. The electronic document shall be saved using a brief descriptor to sufficiently identify the document agenda topic and date.

The consensus of the Committee was to forward the final version to the Board of Commissioners.

Ann will provide an analysis at a future date of the evaluation of the time it has taken her to compile the packets for the Board of Commissioners. Stan thought that there may be an additional conversation between the

City Manager and Ann to assess her time for compiling a packet for the Communications Committee.

**Update and discussion about ongoing City website overhaul with Max Hamby, IT Department Supervisor.**
1. **Review history of the City website, genesis of ongoing website overhaul and role of the Communications Committee relative to the website.**

    Stan provided a brief overview of the history of the existing website. The Committee reviewed and made recommendations for a facelift to the website. As a result of the review, a major overhaul was recommended because substantial changes would need to be made. Stan and Dave Henderson, former IT Director, compiled a 93 page document incorporating the recommendations. A lot of the recommended changes are still applicable today, and all the concepts still apply. The cover letter from the 93 page document was incorporated in the support packet and provided the objectives of the facelift, such as individual department pages, visitor information, a mini-website for Convention Center within the main website, etc. Karen Zakarian supplied two pages of information regarding the Convention Center last week. Stan suggested that there be a meeting to move the Convention Center information such as floor plans, etc. to move forward.

    Max Hamby, IT Director, noted that he has the CADD drawings for the existing conditions regarding the Convention Center. The floor layouts are needed from Karen.

    Stan has received a cost estimate from the architect to produce final drawings of the floor layouts. He will have a future conversation with Max regarding whether this work will be done in-house or contracted. Another item to be incorporated on the new website is forms organization. The Committee would like to see that the forms are online and are fillable forms with the possibility of submitting them electronically. A policy for review of the City website was included in the Committee's support packet for awareness.

2. **Review of standing committee policy to monitor the website.**

    The policy for review of the City website was included in the Committee's support packet for awareness.

3. **Overview of approach to website overhaul, preview of new design and status of project.**
4. **Discussion about new website to include comments, recommendations, role of the communications.**

    A sample of the new website pages was include in the Committee's support packet.

    Max provided an overview of the new website. At the end of October 2013, Inclind, the web development company from Georgetown, DE, started building the actual development of the website on Drupal which is an open source contact management system. The website will be managed by the IT Department with the expectation of doling accountability out to individual departments to update their own information. Training will be provided. It will be expected that the department heads will have the rights to edit their own pages. It was anticipated that Inclind would be done with its side of the website at the very lease by the first of January 2014, but a few scheduling impacts, staffing, coordinating meeting dates and reviews with Inclind around the holidays, etc. occurred. Currently, approximately 90% of the development is complete. In the past month, Max and Willie Merchant have had training on the back end of the Drupal product. The website is meeting Max's expectations. Part of Inclind's scope of services is to migrate static blocks of text from the old website into the new website. There are several applications which are database driven such as calendars, news items, etc. that are not part of Inclind's contract. The migration of the static blocks of text will be done in-house. No RFP was done for this project. Most of the content has been migrated. As part of this project, there was a small branding exercise at the beginning to incorporate the imagery for the City. This imagery will replace the City Seal as the focal image of the town. The City Seal has been placed on the website. The new website bridges the utility of a town government and a tourism attraction site. The website will provide better navigation for what the visitor to the site is looking for. Max provided the Committee with a glimpse of what the new website is going to look like, navigation, etc.

    Toni Sharp said that there was a lively discussion which included Mayor Sam Cooper about how the City Seal is viewed vs. any other imagery. This may be a different discussion at another time. There was a lot of energy around making sure that the City Seal is the City's public representation and other items. Other images would never replace the official City Seal.

    Stan has a purchase order which was issued by the former City Manager to an artist to clean up the City Seal. Before he goes to the designer, Stan will meet with Sharon Lynn, City Manager and Max to

review that. Part of the design addendum is to make one template for all the color City Seals and two templates for the black and white Seals that can be reduced in size.

Max noted that his main goal was to clean up the navigation of the website to make it easier to move through it. The new website has search functionality. There will be integration with a third party mail service through Mail Chimp for email blasts, mass emailing, etc. The new contact form will have a drop down menu to choose which department the person is looking to contact. To date, the department heads have not been included in discussions, and they have not been advised that they will be responsible for answering the concerns.

Sharon said that if a concern is filtered to a specific department, there needs to be a person who reads and disseminates the information and gets back to other person. Currently, she did not know if every department has the capability of doing that. If there is no feedback or no communication from within the departments, it will fail from the start.

Toni said that when the site is launched, there will be better navigation, and it will be more user-friendly. The expectation of the community and the Committee is that there will be a host of new features that the residents, visitors and businesses can use. She asked what the scope is of the new features.

Patrick Gossett said that with all the new features, there should also be the capability to support those, not only from the standpoint of the technology aspect but also with staffing.

Max said that in order to have the forms 100%, it will be another year before rolling out the new website. Stan would like to have this conversation with the City Manager.

Max said that Inclind is ready to go and the majority of it is there. At this point, a select group of people needs to review the website and a client review should be generated. The main thing now are the pictures and the content. There is outdated information on the old site which needs to be identified and made current. There are gaps in the content where pages never existed before such as the main page for visitors. This is normally the type of information which would be gotten from a marketing director or public relations person, someone who has initiatives in place and is using this area to target the user.

Stan questioned who will determine what will go on the website. This is a city website, not a tourism website.

Max said that with regard to a copywriter, an editor is needed to give consistency to the tone and message. Typically this is something a marketing person does. Not a lot of text has been edited in the past year, and consistency is needed throughout the site. The dynamic information will be moved over internally.

Max noted that a website is done in an incremental process. Discussion ensued as to whether a review of the website should be done now or wait until the dynamic information has been put on the new website.

Toni said that she is very uneasy about how the accountability will be viewed in the final analysis. Stan said that there will be a partnership to a certain point, but the ultimate decision will be made by the City Manager. Sharon said that part of the frustration is that there is not one person who has the creativity other than the Committee or Max to make the end product work and bring it back to the Committee. If no one was ever assigned to do that and Inclind was not tasked to do that through communication or the contract with them, so now the Committee is trying to do it which is time consuming and difficult.

Stan said that all the existing City website information should be incorporated into the new site, and he had not seen much of any of it incorporated in there. The Committee is amenable to slowing the launch down. Max said that the majority of the content which Inclind gleaned off of the old website is on the new site. The only content left is moving the dynamic information over from the old site.

Patrick said that Inclind has fixed the navigational issue, and the challenge of not finding information has been resolved. The content is another issue.

Max said that he charged Inclind with building a platform that will contain the functionality that the Committee requested such as the ability to have mapping, etc. Primary it is all there. One of reasons for having a review is so Max can create a punchlist for Inclind to change/add/delete.

Stan will meet with the City Manager and Max to discuss sending out the link to the new website with instructions on what to do. The timeframe would be approximately two weeks to review the site.

With regard to the following Agenda items, Stan will forward a memorandum to the City Manager and copied to the Committee.

5. **Discussion on maintenance of content on the City website to include discussion about personnel and budgeting considerations.**

**Discussion with City Manager Sharon Lynn about a potential program for the City to issue "Welcome" letters:**
1. **TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY OWNERS.**
2. **TO BUSINESS OWNERS.**

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING.**

The next Committee meeting will be held on February 28 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

There being no further business, Chairman Stan Mills adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**


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**(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)**


**MINUTES APPROVED ON
APRIL 25, 2014**


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**(Stan Mills, Chairman)**