

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

**February 28, 2014**

The Communications Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chairman Stan Mills on Friday, February 28, 2014 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairman Stan Mills, Janet Anderson, Toni Sharp, Lorraine Zellers, Jimmy Horthy III  
Also Present: Max Hamby (IT Director), Sharon Lynn (City Manager)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the December 6, 2013 Communications Committee Meeting were distributed prior to the meeting.

Toni Sharp made a motion, seconded by Lorraine Zellers, to approve the December 6, 2013 Communications Committee Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Update and discussion about ongoing City website overhaul.**

**1. Discussion about web project to include status and management of project, results of preliminary review of new draft site and timeline to advance including going live.**

City Manager Sharon Lynn and Max Hamby participated in a phone conference on February 13, 2013 with Mark Tomlinson, project manager from Inclind, Mark had informed them of what Inclind was charged with and has completed. Testing has been completed in all documentation areas of the pages of the website. The development of the site will be finished for the end of the contract period. The end of the contract is more so the end of the scope of work. As of February 13, 2013, there were two training sessions left. Currently, a copywriter or content manager will need to be brought onboard to follow through with the City's end of the project in getting the content up and running. The end of Inclind's contract was discussed and what Inclind could or would do in the future for the City. Max and Sharon have interviewed two individual content managers who are interested in performing that part of the service for the City. Karen Faulk and Amanda Ponco are both associated in some way with the City. Sharon was satisfied with both of their introductions.

Max noted that Inclind was charged with providing a platform which allows the City to put its content into it. This platform would be flexible enough to grow, extend and modify as the City sees fit. It meets the requirements of the platform which had been dictated at the beginning such as mass mailing, social media integration, etc.

Stan questioned whether the content would be filled in by Inclind or by Max. He also noted that the preliminary website is missing more than copywriting.

Max acknowledged that through the evaluation of Inclind's deliverables, the City is where it should be in the creation of the platform, and everything is there. There is an entire backend administrative console that the public does not see which is where pages are created, modifications can be made to the content, and some features that have been built in such as signing up for mail, newsletter, etc. can be exposed. E-news has no public display other than signing up for it and sending it out through emails. Max has seen the deliverable provided by Inclind to provide the ability to come into a site where it can be navigated not only with what there is currently, but also with enhancements the Committee wanted. Some of the things are may be there, but they are not displayed where the Committee might want them to be displayed, i.e. the survey module. The ability is there to create surveys. Max could expose the survey display into the public facing on the website.

Toni said that Max would be the only one who can say whether or not what Inclind has done is really there.

Max said that by moving away from the current provider to this new platform will give the City a lot of flexibility that it has not had before. The platform can be extended without Inclind's involvement. The City owns the entire site and has complete control of the platform. It will have the ability to modify whatever issues there are, to create internal marketing initiatives, and to have the flexibility to look structurally at the major ways with which content has been divided. Reducing one big category can be done after the platform is accepted from Inclind.

Sharon mentioned that the copywriter will assist with streamlining. She acknowledged that the department pages would have a mission statement and description, and the pages across the site would need to have continuity. The copywriter position is not a permanent position. It will be someone to edit content, streamline and have it in a form where it can be published. It will be the City's responsibility to maintain and manage that.

Max said that the copywriter will help to gather the pertinent information and provide it consistently. The Committee had been tasked to review the preliminary website and provide Max with problem areas and concerns. In looking at the feedback from the Committee, 80% was more content related than technical issues that need to be corrected.

Stan mentioned that at some point the timeline would need to be discussed, what the steps are and whether or not the Committee has further questions. He thought that the purview of the City Manager is to hire the copywriter.

Sharon said that she would be happy with hiring either one of the copywriters.

Max said that with regard to the copywriter working on an Adobe site as opposed to providing word documents to be used, he was not looking for someone to be able to format what has been done on the website. While he is not opposed to that, it is not one of his requirements for that person. If the person has the experience, he is more than willing to use them on it, but that would require more time and involvement.

Sharon noted that Inclind had started work in July 2013, and a December 2013 rollout was expected. Inclind has performed what it was contracted to perform. The next step is for the City to get it all together and take it to the next level, so the rollout of the website may be a couple months lagging.

Max said he will be working with the content manager as part of the scope of work. It involves interviewing City employees to find out what the pertinent information is so that it can be augmented, revised or edited what is there for accuracy. Sharon noted that content managers know what to ask because they work with the content all the time, so they will have their own expectations of employees and be able to bring out the information that they feel is needed.

Stan asked what involvement the Committee would have in moving forward with this process. Max said that the website will be a constant review site. Sharon acknowledged that there would be involvement by the Committee. Janet thought that Max should be providing the Committee with emails to look at updated areas of the website. Toni thought that the continued involvement of the Committee should be at the discretion of the City Manager and Max when it is appropriate for that to take place. In the final analysis on how the website will be managed ongoing, the accountability for the site itself will belong to the City Manager and Max. Sharon recommended getting someone onboard. It is important for the Committee to hear specifically from the individual, who is hired to do this, a brief presentation of where they are, possibly at the next meeting. That person will lead the Committee for guidance, so the Committee will feel that its needs are being met at that point. This is an outside contractor who will not need to spend time at the Committee's meeting, but just to show it so that there is a comfort level that the pages are being filled with what the Committee desires and intends the website to be.

Sharon acknowledged that her vision once the website is launched is that on an ongoing maintenance basis, the responsibility for content always being what it should be will go the department heads who report to Sharon. Sharon said that it will be Max's responsibility for the content to always be what it should be. He will be the point person and manage the website. Max will probably do most of it because there are department heads who do not use a computer. This will have to be worked on. Hopefully, the majority of it will be that department heads will be able to push the information along, and Max will be able to distribute that information through the website. She is also looking to get a part-time person to continue to manage the website.

- 2. Follow up on committee recommendation for better website maintenance including appropriation of additional personnel and/or additional budgeting considerations if needed.**

Stan said that additional monies have been put in the budget to be used specifically for better maintenance of the website and used at the discretion of the City Manager. He thought it would be in the purview of the City Manager to draft a policy with what ads and what links go on the website, etc. and share it with the Committee and Commissioners.

### **3. Discussion of any additional recommended content for the new website.**

The City Manager had brought a specific video proposal to Stan. Some of that information was provided to the Committee. Stan referred to the City of Lewes website regarding videos to promote the town. Ads would be solicited.

Hoyte Decker, board member of the Rehoboth Beach Museum, mentioned that a video has been put on the Museum's website about the Museum. This video was done in-house.

Stan said that the initial concept of the video interests him. Early in the website development, the Committee's desire was to list all the businesses, but it was found to be potentially cumbersome to manage, and in talking with the City Manager and Mayor, they have a policy of not marketing other entities. Stan was not interested in marketing other entities. Main Street and Chamber of Commerce are there for those kinds of things. In terms of marketing the City as a tourist destination via the videos, it may be alright to do so, but Stan would defer this to Main Street and Chamber of Commerce.

Sharon suggested making an education video to put on the City website to educate people about the different programs in the City, such as what is being done to keep Rehoboth beaches safe. Janet suggested that a video could be done to market the Convention Center in how it is being used.

Karen Zakarian said that as the Committee makes its decisions, she will need direction and insight from the City Manager as to what should/should not be forwarded for the Convention Center.

Stan summarized that with this specific proposal, the Committee is recommending not to take any action on it. However, the thought of producing in-house education videos at some point in the future is appetizing.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discussion with City Manager Sharon Lynn about a potential program for the City to issue "Welcome" letters:**

- 1. To residential property owners – Commissioner Sharp.**
- 2. To business owners – Commissioner Zellers.**

Toni noted that the objective of a welcome program is to welcome new residents to downtown Rehoboth as well as businesses to the community. So as not to burden City staff or budgets, the Committee has partnered with Main Street to provide the City's information in a packet in the welcome bags prepared by Main Street. The information would be specific to downtown Rehoboth such as a welcome letter, the walking guide, biking information, courtesy notice, City newsletter, etc. A few members of the Committee would be responsible for assembling the packets to be put in the Main Street bags for distribution. Approximately 100 to 150 packets would be done in any given year.

Sharon thought that the packets could also be distributed at the front desk in City Hall.

Lorraine noted that something similar would be done to welcome new businesses to the community. A welcome letter would be provided with contact information and emergency numbers, where to find information on the City website, etc. She had spoken with Building Inspector Terri Sullivan who thought this was a good idea. She suggested that once the businesses are approved, this letter could be sent out with business licenses. Lorraine also met with Janette Clavette, Administrative Office, who also liked the idea of sending out these letters with the licenses.

Jimmy thought that by starting the program this way, it can evolve into looking at the information on the website.

Sharon suggested that emergency contact information could be provided on a magnet for new homeowners, residents and business owners.

Toni thought that the language in the letters could be crafted so that it talks about the current website, and a certain amount of copies could be made of the letters. When the new website is launched, the language could be redrafted.

Sharon thought that this program was a great idea and that the program should move forward.

**Discussion of any additional recommended content for the new website.**

Additional content for the new website is: 1. An American Disabilities Act (ADA) page which might be required by Federal law. 2. Project page to find out what is going on with a project, timeline, etc.

Max said that the City website will have to be maintained and will have to comply with screen readers for the blind. Depending on the service used to create the video or whoever hosts it such as U-Tube, offloading it would provide close captioning, social networking at U-Tube, etc. The more the City complies with its standards, the more accessible the site is. Max expects that the information which is placed on the home page of the new website should change all the time. It could be one page, a series of pages, a microsite, etc. He and the personnel in his department would be able to put that information on the site. Other employees can be trained to do so which would be at the discretion of the City Manager. Max has been talking with Chuck Snyder with regards to new photographs to be added to the new website.

**DISCUSS AND PRIORITIZE ITEMS TO INCLUDE ON FUTURE AGENDAS.**

Items to include are to: 1. Meet the copywriter at a future meeting. 2. Continued discussion regarding the new City website.

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING.**

The next scheduled meet will be held on March 28, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT**

There was none.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

There being no further business, Chairman Mills adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

**MINUTES APPROVED ON  
JUNE 27, 2014**

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**(Stan Mills, Chairman)**