

MEETING MINUTES AD HOC COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 19TH - 6:00 P.M. LAKE GENEVA CITY HALL

Chair Alderperson Mary Jo Fesenmaier called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Present were public members Jay Fairbanks, Mary Sibbing, and Scott Gelzer as well as Chairperson Fesenmaier and Ald. Cindy Flower. City Administrator David Nord was also present.

There were several comments from the public. Cell phone reception is a community-wide concern and several area cell towers are possibly not operational. The number of views of Geneva Shore Report videos was offered as a notation of the importance of video communications.

The minutes from the Committee's July 26th meeting were reviewed. On a motion from Jay Fairbanks and seconded by Mary Sibbing, the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Updates from previous conversations included: 1) the potential of an electronic sign (Business Improvement District funding) in Flat Iron Park as an alternative to one in front of City Hall; 2) the possibility of the Geneva Shore Report becoming an additional outlet for publishing City meeting information; 3) contact was made with the Regional News about a regular City information feature; and 4) an Information Technology working group in City Government will update the Ad-Hoc Committee on its progress at the next meeting.

The committee is using a "Google Doc" to discuss and report out ideas about communications. Going forward, at the suggestion Ald. Fesenmaier, this document will be available for viewing.

Chair Fesenmaier led the committee through a review of the various portions of action research completed since the last meeting. Following, using the areas of conversation from last meeting, were highlights:

- ☀ What goal(s) do we seek to achieve through improved and intentional two-way communications between the City of Lake Geneva and its residents? Key items are two-way communications and resident engagement. Mary Sibbing's further research on Minneapolis as a possible model provides this sample goal: *"To be a driving force in effectively and accurately communicating information about the City, promoting transparency, and inviting the public to engage in the governing process so people who live, work and play in Minneapolis better understand, appreciate and benefit from the work the City does."*
- ☀ What tools can we employ? Committee member Fairbanks provided a menu of links from the Roanoke VA website, which provide a broad range of interests. As an option, committee member Gelzer called attention to the "My Columbus" app, a single application, which is included in an article on using social media to build resident involvement. The article link is in the Google Doc. Both are options to study.
- ☀ How can the existing City website be improved? Committee member Sibbing is arranging a consultation with the City of Minneapolis, probably for our October meeting. The committee discussed both the interactive citizen inquiry form and the print Building Department form – both should be reviewed. Dave Nord commented briefly on the small city websites listed in the Google Doc, which were identified by his peer City administrators as models.

☀ How can we improve existing communications channels? Nixle has 913 subscribers; could it be built out to have a broader menu of options for subscription, both in text and email? How about email notifications for City Council meetings, not just when the agenda is available, was one of several suggestions by Ald. Flower. City phone calls to residents present a “no caller ID” tag, leading many to think the calls are telemarketers. Chair Fesenmaier asked Administrator Dave Nord to look into the cell tower reception challenge profiled in public comments. Minutes from our meeting can be shared with the IT Committee for further exploration.

Moving to future research, the Committee determined that it would like to host a roundtable conversation with active local social media users. Invited guests could include: 1) the social media/communications director from the League of WI Municipalities’ (virtual guest); Visit Lake Geneva; the Library, Fire Department or other municipal agencies identified as active users of media; and others identified by the Chair or committee members.

Questions for the roundtable conversation include: 1) What types of social media do you use? 2) What is your group’s feedback on using various types of media, ranging from apps to websites, to Facebook? 3) What advice would you offer to the City to help build its two-way communications capacity? 4) What future plans do you have for communications?

Finally, there is a roster of other ideas that the Committee is mindful of as it moves ahead. What about Citywide WI-FI? How can we identify effective channels for communication with our Spanish-speaking neighbors? Tackling a specific topic, how could we improve notifications of an immediate concern such as a street repair project?

The Committee’s next meeting date was set for Wednesday September 16th, 6:00 PM at City Hall. Chair Fesenmaier and Ald. Flower again thanked the committee for its work.

There was no further business. On a motion by Scott Gelzer, seconded by Mary Sibbing, the committee unanimously approved adjournment at 7:39 PM.