

November 17, 2020

The Public Communications Ad Hoc Committee held a special virtual meeting on this date at 5:00 p.m. Katie Martin, Bruce Flax, Denise Easton, Daniel McFadden, Kristin Clarke and Elizabeth Young were in attendance. Public and press were able to participate via audio on a conference call line. The video of the meeting can be found on the Town's YouTube page.

Call to Order

Bruce Flax called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence- Mr. Flax asks the committee if anyone has received any correspondence. Each member answered "no."

Approval of Minutes- Mr. Flax asked the committee if there was anything that needed to be adjusted to the minutes of the group meeting held on October 22nd meeting. No further corrections or adjustments were made. Denise Easton made a motion to approve the minutes and Dan McFadden seconded the motion. The group then unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Old Business-

Discussion- Review Stonington's existing communication mechanisms. What are other communities doing? Best practices?:

Mr. Flax presents his findings on what he has researched regarding the use of social media across neighboring towns. He discovered that some towns had links to social media easily displayed on the website. Mr. Flax created a spreadsheet that he emailed out to each member to show his comparisons.

Kristin Clarke adds that Stonington has a great Instagram presence compared to other neighboring towns. She found that most towns did not have an Instagram account when researching.

Katie Martin shares her findings, to include some features Stonington could add to improve the town website to drive traffic to the site based on what other towns have on their existing websites.

Elizabeth Young spoke with Ms. Stacey Haskell and was able to obtain Instagram insights and analytics on the age and demographic of the town's followers. (75% female/25% male).

Discussion – How do we score things and what needs to be scored?

Mr. Flax- Do we create a scoring sheet? Committee agrees that perhaps that will come later as we continue to look into the communication practices more closely. Where should we upload the data discovered when researching the town vs. other town's social criteria?

Denise Easton- will send the link to the google doc so that everyone can upload their findings. Adds the link to the chat box during the virtual meeting.

Outreach to Boards and Commissions: how do they currently communicate with town officials, community members, with other boards and commissions?

Mr. Flax will follow up with Ms. Chesebrough for more insight on current communications outlook

Dan McFadden: Explore how we reach constituents (residents and business owners, managers, town staff) Start contacting town officials to understand the communication going on among boards and commissions. Start virtual conversations- schedule a few meetings in the new year for the public to attend.

Denise Easton- start a google doc that has the kinds of questions that we would want to ask collectively to obtain the answers we are looking for.

Discussion-

Mr. Flax- Focus groups vs. Survey Monkey? Look at the different ways we can reach the community for communication input.

Elizabeth Young- Use Facebook to communicate primarily. Currently underutilized but could be the best way to share information the town wants to communicate.

The committee will continue to:

- Explore how the Town can better communicate with the public through the use of social media and the Town website;
Consider the establishment of a Town newsletter and other forms of communications, including cost involved:
- Explore ways for Boards/Commission to better communicate with the public as well as with each other;
- Contact other municipalities for suggestions and recommendations as to best provide and obtain information from Town residents; and
Make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen consistent with their findings on or before October 31, 2021.

Discussion – Assignment of Tasks

Each group member will add information to the google doc to keep each other informed. It will serve to further conversations and discussions for the committee going forward.

- Research on what other Communities are doing for communication - mapping and samples/best practices; outreach to those communities to see how they are resourced. Discuss scoring/review sheet for research purposes.
- Reviewing Town's existing communication mechanisms - social media posts (written and video), town website ease of navigation and content; email outreach from First Selectman (content/format/outreach)
- Surveys and outreach to our community - what do they like that we are doing; what is working; what is not; creating survey questions; hosting virtual input sessions
- Outreach to Boards and Commission - how do they currently communicate with town officials (liaison); with community members; with other

boards/commissions (communication flow); how do community members feel communication is working/ underling of the Boards and Commissions.

Comments on Old Business: No further comments regarding old business.

New Business: Denise Easton asks if someone could be her back up to beginning WebEx for the meetings. Mr. Flax volunteers to be the back up.

Comments from the Public

None

Comments from the Committee

Mr. Flax will send out a planner for December to decide when the next meeting will take place.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Katie Martin
Recording



Secretary