

NORTH YARMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
September 18, 2015
Minutes

Attending: Donna Palmer, Darla Hamlin, Katie Murphy, Rob Wood, Alex Carr, Rosemary Roy. Visitors: Audrey Lones, Jeanne Chadbourne

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion to approve as printed. Darla/Donna. VOTED.

Town report distribution: Katie is still waiting for reports, including the financial; all is supposed to be in by 9/30 and proofed. The printing hasn't yet been decided by BOS; not sure who is authorized to approve any difference in printing costs. Alex: The BOS is looking at breaking out the printing costs then discussing a strategy for distribution. Darla will provide a spreadsheet for the next BOS meeting on 10/6. Concerning a hanging bag for the report, Darla is working with the NYBA to pay 50% of the cost of the bags (\$295) and have them printed with the START HERE logo and list businesses. The cost of imprinting the bags is \$.21/ea, cheaper than postage, and the bags are biodegradable. Motion: Purchase biodegradable bags at a cost of \$295.05 and ask the NYBA to pay 50%. Darla/Donna. VOTED. Rosemary noted later in the meeting that the cost to print and bind town reports is \$9.35/each, for a total of ~\$13,000. This is a town meeting issue because the budget has already been passed for this year. She made the suggestion that we take highlights from the town report and make a newsletter. Last year we printed 300 reports and have about 30 left over. The budget is \$2800 – this allows for ordering 300 printed and bound copies. The newsletter can direct folks to the town report on the website. Only one newsletter made it into the town budget (see below for further discussion).

Request for access to town communication lists: On 9/1, Linc Merrill requested access to town communications lists for use by the Question 2 people. Rosemary informed him that because the request is political in nature, the answer is no. They can announce a meeting, but the town media policy allows use only for nonpolitical information. She has taken care of this. Also of note, the town email list cannot be obtained through FOAA (Freedom of Access Act) because there are no documents involved, and we don't have to create a document to satisfy a FOAA request.

Candidates' Night review: It was hard to get off the central theme of development, and other topics weren't covered even though the questions were asked. Darla kept trying to get the candidates back on task. The observation was also made that an hour was too short a time to cover other issues – recommend another time going to 1-1/2 hours. Darla's physical position was awkward – she had her back to someone no matter who she faced. Arrange the room differently next time. For the next meeting, room will be rearranged. Audrey: Perhaps have less of a time limit for answers so that other questions could be answered. Jeanne noted that this is a very vital technology-oriented committee, but more needs to be done to get information out to less technology-oriented folks, such as with a newsletter. We could be missing a lot of people. She noted that candidates' night was boring because it only covered one issue. It was also noted that Darla couldn't be heard in the audience because the mike only goes to the TV; we need to work on sound quality. Donna noted that Norm Smith told her that there was no mention of Candidates' Night in the newspaper; only electronic media was used – coverage should be included in at least The Notes and The Forecaster. Rosemary can take care of media notification for future meetings, but we do have to watch the budget for paid ads. Channel 2 should be included in this. Katie noted that first the blurb had to be written, then sent out. So for any publicity we need (1) a list of outlets and (2) the blurb. Who writes the blurb? There was discussion of the difference between an ad and a public notice – ads are guaranteed publication and not all people look at public notices. Difference between the cost of an ad and a published postcard? Ad \$50-60. In a year with a lot of public hearings, staff turnovers, etc., the cost of ads mounts up. People don't read and ads are short. We will have to factor in a candidates' night in next year's plans and expenses.

Sound system: Rosemary noted that the lapel mikes are a huge improvement. With the mikes in place, she will next call in a consultant who has worked with this system to make recommendations for improvement and to work with Paul. Concern: Adjustments need to be both flexible and movable. We should also be looking at video streaming. Virtual Town Hall provides streaming; Vimeo only goes to the website. VTH charges \$5000-6000 to do streaming; equipment can be rented for around \$1200/year. Paul can do streaming

and uploading. Rosemary spoke to Bill Shane about any problems that might occur if we stream. If we want the capability for replaying meetings as many times as possible, then we need to update equipment so that we can put content up on Channel 2. We have separate Vimeo and Time Warner accounts. Rosemary is trying for better quality. [UPDATES NEEDED FOR OUR NEXT MEETING] Hopefully we can get an analysis of the whole room. We need to improve our system regardless of the November vote. Darla also mentioned the capability of displaying PowerPoints so that the audience can follow along with questions, etc.

Strategies and timelines for the November election information: We have the authority to come up with issues and strategies. Alex: We should be operating under a system of fair play – clarify what is true and what is not true. Katie noted that calling Question 1 “2A” is not clear. We should be using either Question 1 or the name of the proposal: Village Center Redevelopment Proposal. We aren’t responsible for Q2, but we need to deal with FACTS only. The EDSC has printed and distributed (at Fun Day) FAQ sheets – these questions are what people have been asking for and what needs to get out, regardless of personal opinions. They will also be at the polls on September 21. Alex noted that maybe public sites shouldn’t be used for some of the strategies. Send out postcards for the second meeting. If the Q2 people have meetings, we can announce them. Get permission to put out information for both sides at the polls. There also needs to be an open dialogue with Linc (spokesperson for Q2) for whatever we are doing to give them the opportunity to advertise. Rosemary noted that postcard notices are to get information to the public from the BOS – this becomes a slippery slope if the town is paying for a postcard that involves an alternative group. The selectmen are only required to put a valid petition on the warrant and review it; they are not responsible for getting information from alternative petitions. Q1: leaders of the town sponsored this for the town. The BOS invited Q2 people to have a hearing. So far there has been no Q2 response to the scheduled 10/21 EDSC meeting. The BOS moderates public hearings; there was also discussion of how the BOS handles meetings. On 9/24 there will be a Sevee & Mahar public hearing; BOS will chair and there will be no Q&As. Public hearings are just for folks to listen. Notes of any questions from the EDSC and the public hearings will be collected for the 10/21 meeting, which will be a give and take meeting with questions, statements, etc. EDSC will lead this meeting and will be the face of the meeting. Katie: If the Q2 people ask for an informational meeting, can they use town properties? Rosemary spoke to Linc – they can reserve a room, put out information, etc., but as a separate group not as any part of town structure. Rosemary noted that they have their own strategies and have to keep separate so as not to confuse people.

What should we be doing in the next few weeks?

- FAQ sheet already vetted; will be tweaked for the polls on 9/21
- BOS letter: Audrey asked if we helped formulate the BOS letter; in the past we have helped with this. Send this letter out as mailing week of 10/5. The BOS likes Audrey’s presentation and will use it with collaboration with Alex to create the letter. The cost of the BOS letter mailing comes from the BOS budget. Katie noted that the BOS comes up with the content for this letter, but we can use it in other ways – RFTH, letters to the editor, etc.
- 10/1 send out postcard for the public hearings for both Q1 and Q2. On this postcard we could also add a box describing town report availability.
- After this, deal with newsletter, which may be a whole different project; maybe do this after the November meeting. If we only have one newsletter funded for this year, then if we use it to summarize or feature the town report, then it won’t be available to use for economic or town development.
- Rob noted that we need to compile and distribute facts before the public hearings.

How do we handle all the information that needs to be disseminated and mailed out with only two vehicles?

- Newsletter can be funded from economic development funds. Audrey was planning on outreach and on lobbying this to Communications Committee. The next EDSC meeting is 10/7 – she can start the ball rolling by advising EDSC members ahead of the meeting about the newsletter. Katie as acting chair of EDSC will email Communications and EDSC with link to Google Doc soliciting newsletter ideas, which an EDSC subgroup can start work on asap. This newsletter needs to be distributed before 10/14 (first public hearing).
- Newsletter for the town report can come from Communication Committee funds.

Our next steps:

- Format postcard for public hearings by 10/1; send to Rosemary. Include town report info.
- BOS writes own letter; no decision on when to mail.
- Communications Committee newsletter to highlight town report. No specific target date for delivery; most likely around 10/31.
- Katie sends Donna town report draft copy that she has now so that Donna can start extracting information. Kathy will help if necessary.

Rosemary noted that we shouldn't give up on publications if deadlines aren't met – keep going anyway.

Next meeting: Friday, October 2, 7:30 am, Downstairs Meeting Room.