

NORTH YARMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
February 13, 2015
Minutes

Attending: Alex Carr, Donna Palmer, Audrey Lones, Darla Hamlin, Jess Whited, Kathy Whittier

Darla chaired the meeting in Rob's absence.

Motion to accept minutes of previous meeting: Donna/Darla. Voted with the change of one typo, third paragraph, "go" should be "got."

Donna handed out a copy of the postcard from the BOS and a sample of communication strategies.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Letterhead template: This was completed and sent to Rosemary to print.
2. Postcard: Jess provided a sample of template at full size. The image would be changed based on the season. This will go out the last week of February; the letter from Steve goes out next week.
3. Sample newsletter from Jess: The four-color sample will be sent to Rosemary; for the Budget Committee and possibly BOS. Print quotes are needed for the newsletter – Rob did a general budget. Jess will put together specs for Rosemary to go out to bid, including bleed and paper stock. Check with a printer for standard weights. Newsletter in general: Audrey – need more direct links for signup; Darla will check how to obtain a shortened URL. Alex – the newsletter is meant to be a filler between RFTH and the annual report; he would like to see more information from committees because town departments are covered in Rosemary's report on the website. Needs to include useful information. Jess needs to know the priorities. Donna: RFTH information-gathering process – sends out reminders on Monday, gets responses, Thursday sends copy to Jess and Rosemary to check heads and subheads, then Jess organizes. Newsletter schedule: Three per year; Town Report included in the schedule for the year. The newsletter budget will be going to the Budget Committee and Rosemary for the next fiscal year. The schedule would start with the Town Report then go quarterly after that. Audrey noted that the most important stuff would be Town Report then development, which can be covered by other means. Ask Rosemary to set up a calendar for the newsletter then publicize.
4. Communications media policy: Donna and Darla looked for copies of old media policy and distributed that they found. Alex commented on Facebook as a one-way medium; he also noted that emails to Town Manager and BOS should be replied to. Idea for article: How to contact your town office. Now it cannot be known whether someone answers. Also important to note in any policy we publicize that Facebook is not a place where people can be expected to reply. Three bulletproof methods for contacting public officials to get a reply should be publicized. Darla: We should start over on a media policy. Donna: If the existing policy that they found is official, then it should be changed by the BOS, not us. Alex: BOS would like recommendations from us; e.g., who communicates for the town? Rosemary, Debbie, chairs of boards, heads of things? MOTION: Moe discussion of media policy to a meeting where more members are present so we can discuss at greater length. Donna/Darla. Voted. We should also ask Rosemary and Debbie to attend as well; ask them for input before the next meeting (Darla will ask Rosemary to find media policy).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Virtual Town Hall: Rosemary has asked us to hear a representative give a demo on VTH. Have Debbie send us a spreadsheet of towns using VTH so that we can check out before the next meeting. We should also ask the VTH representative which site(s) he/she feels best illustrate the use of the program. Gov. office is not intuitive and is hard to use because knowledgeable people can't get into the code to make changes. Whatever we are using needs to be easy for both the reader and the generator to use. The choice was narrowed down to VTH by Rosemary and Debbie after research. Donna has been looking at WIX, which has all of the features and is easy to use. Darla noted that vehicles built for town use have template items that apply to towns. Alex: There is more power in town-oriented programs to accept additional tools such as assessment documents than in free programs. Because Debbie and Rosemary leaning toward VTH, they should come to a meeting where this is being discussed. Ask them (ahead of time) for their second choice? Audrey: VTH also

has a mobile app. Darla will talk to Rosemary and invite her and Debbie to our next meeting, March 13.

2. Brian Sites (Recreation) would like to meet with several people from Communications Committee to discuss branding; Events Committee and EDSC should also be included with this. Audrey would like to participate; she has new people on EDSC. Katie is on both CC and EDSC; she could be involved. Audrey will post the EDSC minutes. Alex will contact Katie and people – Brian would like to be working on signs for trails this spring. Connection with Funday T-shirts, etc.? A lot of events are still in the wheelhouse for the Rec people. Donna noted that Skyline's brand is part of the North Yarmouth brand – might they be nervous about our including them in the town brand? Audrey: No, it is a symbiotic relationship but inclusive with town stuff. Darla would like to attend as well. Donna: Rec opportunities are integral to town identity – why people move here. Alex will propose a meeting date to Brian. Objective is that all town branding matches and can use recurring themes.
3. Communication strategy regarding development and economic growth: Letter from Steve was discussed (needs to fit on one page). Donna also handed out a draft of RFTH going out today. Audrey had suggestions for tweaking the article relating to economic development. The list of documents (from PDI, Blatt, Sevee & Maher, etc.) on the website should be reordered perhaps from newest to oldest so that people can find stuff when they click. Work on this before the town meetings in March to identify primary documents. Audrey will work at reordering the documents; she will check with Debbie and Mark. There will be stuff posted later that will boil down the information.
4. Strategy document: Mark (Girard), Steve (Palmer), and Audrey are all working on this. Audrey proposed one additional question: How does this benefit the town (and the people who don't live in the village center)? This is a working document for these meetings just identifying issues. A FAQ sheet is needed to identify issues to be handled in the future, e.g., Wescustogo and Veterans Park. The purpose of this would be to head off questions that aren't being covered now, questions that aren't part of this discussion but aren't being totally ignored. Who will do the FAQs? Alex is thinking about Town Meeting, when people bring up things without any knowledge of what's been going on, e.g., Wescustogo and Historical Society. Importance of facts vs. opinions: Selectmen have identified their opinion. The BOS is mostly moving toward April town meeting for a decision; deliverables for the Town Meeting warrant are due 4/3. After the last public hearing, there will probably be a special BOS meeting to finalize the warrant. TIFs are a great tool, but we need time to develop; they could be brought up as a way to pay for things. They are better used for upgrading infrastructure and town services, things in the future needing upgrades, e.g., fire service. TIFs free up money for other uses, such as road improvements. A presentation presenting a perspective on the growth of town services would be a better way of addressing this issue. If the question is asked, Why are my taxes proportionally higher?, answer without bringing up the old Cumberland vs. North Yarmouth issues. "Better equalize valuations between the two towns."
5. List of FAQs: Brainstorm this list via email, then organize to best setup for meetings. Audrey will start the FAQs. Audrey notes that she usually includes the Family Network and SAD 51 in her information distribution.
6. Distribution for CC: Audrey has been added, and Alex will forward minutes to BOS members for comment. Do we need to add Pam (Ames) for the Budget Committee? Audrey will ask her.
7. Next meeting, Friday, March 13, 7:30 am, Downstairs Meeting Room.