

NORTH YARMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

November 21, 2014

Minutes

Attending: Katie Murphy, Alex Carr, Rob Wood, Kathy Whittier.

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion to accept as printed: Katie/Rob. Voted.

Rob met with Steve Palmer and Alex Carr concerning the charge. The original charge: *The Communications Committee provides expertise and consultation to the Board of Selectmen and town staff to better inform North Yarmouth citizens on town events and issues.* Rosemary's suggested version: *The Communications Committee provides recommendations and operational support to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager to more effectively inform North Yarmouth citizens of town events and issues and continues to build on and improve the town image, characteristics, and symbolism.*

Alex noted that we are volunteers, and operational support should come from staff, so we shouldn't be doing that. Newsletters would be a good use of our time. Oversight should mean that we let the BOS know where the ball is dropping. It's hard to manage town office rhythms when we meet monthly, and the staff deals with stuff daily. It's ok if we can take some tasks, but it isn't necessary for us to be available daily.

Rob noted that if we are going to advise the town to be more effective, we need a budget.

Alex: What about the "oversight" part? This is nebulous. We need to examine the process. A quarterly newsletter is more in our wheelhouse and rhythm; postcards aren't in our rhythm – these should be handled by Steve or Rosemary. We did the postcard template, but with the object of handing off to the TM and staff, which never happened. Katie noted that the postcards need a staff person but also some expertise with production. Expertise is available in a lot of areas – ok to use on an as-needed basis. The board has done some musing about postcards, but there has been no followup or any real progress.

The quarterly newsletter represents a larger body of work – collecting, writing, editing, production. This should be a paid position. Katie: Part of the town brand is to make it effective. What about the efficacy of a newsletter? Does the recipient have time to read it? Rob: Hoped that RFTH would be more informative; more like a bulletin board – would be in favor of a newsletter. Katie: A newsletter could be more anecdotal stories of people and events.

Charge/Mission statement: We have chosen the middle ground between total oversight and operational support. *The Communications Committee will provide expertise and consultation to the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager to more effectively inform North Yarmouth citizens of town events and issues and will continue to build on and improve the town brand.* Motion: Accept the mission statement and send to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Rob/Katie. Voted. Alex needs to present to BOS; Kathy will send written copy to Rob; Rob will talk to Steve and if necessary go to BOS meeting. Rob will also work on our budget; Katie will pull together figures for a quarterly newsletter, which will hopefully be under the contractual limit. The budget will be in line item form.

TASKS/ACTIVITIES/FOCUS

Suggestions: quarterly newsletter, development of town brand, welcome signage, postcards. Abdicating: website activities BUT we provide feedback on web/electronic presence. We can task ourselves to go out to focus groups to get feedback. Alex: We need to be very clear also on what is contract work. We identify stuff that someone needs to fix – missing links, changing pictures, old calendar items. The town needs to budget for the ability to fix things. The most appropriate visibility for tasks is in the budget, which can be adjusted depending on need. An editor for writing projects might also be budgeted for.

Next meeting: Friday, December 19, 7:30 am, downstairs meeting room.