

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, June 02, 2008
Audrey Beck Municipal Building, Conference Room B

Minutes

Members Present: Joyce Crepeau, Leila Fecho, Patrick McGlamery, Toni Moran, Richard Pellegrine, Bill Powers

Absent: Aline Booth

Elected Officials and Staff: Jaime Russell

1. **CALL TO ORDER** 7:00 PM by Toni Moran, second by Leila Fecho.
2. Motion to approve minutes with changes from Monday, May 05, 2008 meeting. Motion made by Richard Pellegrine and seconded by Patrick McGlamery. All approved.
3. No public comment.
 - 3.1. Guest Speaker: Steve Bacon, Partner, Kahan, Kerensky & Capossela, LLP, joined us to share his experience as a member of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC). As background, in March 2006, the Town Council adopted a resolution to form the second only CRC to meet in 36 years regarding the town charter. The CRC was given 13 charges regarding specific portions of the town charter, none of which related to communications. However, as the CRC met and worked together, it became evident there was opportunity to increase town participation and that the town could better communicate with the public, both outgoing and incoming.

Mr. Bacon enumerated the different avenues of communications identified and utilized by the CRC in their efforts to include the community, and what their experience was regarding what worked and what needed additional improvement. Included in the CRC communications mix were: public hearings, time allowed for public comment at each meeting, two sandwich boards to announce the CRC meetings, face-to-face meetings with existing organizations in town (including the League of Women Voters, the Board of Ed and PTOs), participation in the Know Your Town Fair, a letter to all faith-based organizations in town, a flier which was mailed with tax bills to 4-6,000 homes), fliers and information available at the library, meeting dates posted on all seven town sign posts (a discussion of their history and current communications value ensued), a web page, MetaMail (opt-in e-mail broadcasts distributed by the Town Webmaster), an e-mail distribution list for incoming e-mail to all CRC members, a blog, and public and commercial

media. TV, radio and print media included Cable Channel 14, "Let's Talk About It" on WILI AM radio, and print: The Chronicle, Courant, Horizons and Neighbors.

Chairperson Moran inquired regarding the CRC budget. Mr. Bacon noted that the CRC was extremely fortunate for the volunteer expertise afforded to their commission and the process as the granted \$1,100 budget seemed woefully low.

Chairperson Moran inquired regarding the Town's position on publishing information to support the council or school board recommendations for referendum. Mr. Bacon shared his understanding that if a town-wide vote, the Town Manager's Office chose specifically not to provide "educational" information as it could be perceived as advocacy.

4. Old Business: Audio cassette recordings of the Communications Advisory Committee for absent members to review within sixty (60) days of the meeting upon request. The audio recordings are a temporary record only and will not be archived.

Note, it was confirmed that the Committee Chair, or appointed meeting facilitator, CAN recommend a motion for committee approval.

Note, it was confirmed that the rotating duty of secretary would NOT include the Committee Chair or appointed meeting facilitator at any given meeting.

- 4.1. Town Meeting Materials: Mr. McGlamery noted a few comments he had that could be points of discussion at the next meeting:

- 4.1.1. The town meetings are an opportunity to provide communications to the residents regarding the rules of order for a public meeting of that nature, and to state specifically how to make a motion.
- 4.1.2. In the horse-and-buggy days, residents checked the seven sign posts for upcoming events, what should we do looking forward to communicate to a more technology-driven commuter society (i.e., an electronic marquis, web-based content and distribution systems)?

A discussion ensued regarding the current status of the Town Meeting, petition for Referendum and how the Town Referendum would be announced.

MOTION

Ms. Moran offered the following motion verbiage. Mr. McGlamery motioned to accept the motion verbiage, seconded by Ms. Crepeau. All approved.

2008 June 2 MOTION 1

In the absence of specific language in the Mansfield Town Charter regarding the conduct of referenda votes, we recommend, as a matter of communicating to the citizens of the town the most open and democratic form of government, that referenda votes be held at the normal time (hours of operation) and at the normal places where November elections are held (locations as determined by the appointed election officials).

MOTION

Joyce Crepeau made the following motion, seconded by Leila Fecho. All approved.

2008 June 2 MOTION 2

As a matter of communicating to the citizens of Mansfield, we recommend any referenda vote be advertised by signage at minimum at the major intersections (with either a stop sign or stop light) along routes 31, 32, 44, 89, 195 and 275.

Comments to the 2008 June 2 MOTION 2:

- a. We recommend the text of the signs be limited to:
VOTE
Budget Referendum
[Insert Day and Date]
[Insert Start and End Times]
- b. We recommend the lettering be large enough to be clearly visible to a driver, passing through the intersection at a rolling speed.
- c. We recommend the signs be printed and positioned so opposing traffic can also read the text.
- d. We recommend the use of sandwich boards and/or laminated posters.
- e. We recommend the signs be easily mounted and require minimal staff time to prepare and post.

4.2. Unavailable

4.3. Unavailable

4.4. It was determined that, at this point, the committee would not appoint a vice chair as the audio recordings will be available for absent members.

5. New Business:

- 5.1. Postponed. Regarding structure, at our next full meeting, scheduled for August 4th, we should begin to develop our mission statement.
- 5.2. Future Meetings: Jamie Russell provided a list of dates through the end of December, 2008, including room assignments. As three or more members will not be present at either of the two scheduled July meetings, Ms. Fecho motioned we hold no meetings in July. Ms. Crepeau seconded the motion. All agreed. Mr. Russell will post the approved 2008 meeting schedule on the web

site. The next meeting date will be included in the minutes, see below. Note, there will be NO MEETINGS IN JULY.

5.3. **NEXT MEETING:**

Monday, June 16th in Conference Room C at 7:00 p.m.

Special Agenda: Review Referendum materials and discuss possible educational session/s to be offered in Fall Town Program/Calendar.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:** At 9:31, Ms. Crepeau motioned to adjourn. Mr. Powers seconded the motion. All agreed.

7. Items for future Agendas:

- 7.1. How the town is communicating (5/5/08)
- 7.2. Review of the town meeting (5/5/08)
- 7.3. Review advice on communicating to the Council (5/5/08)
- 7.4. Media project, upgrading council meetings, hearing device for hearing impaired residents, overhead media, LCD overhead (5/5/08)
- 7.5. Review of the budget meeting (6/5/08)
- 7.6. Discuss baseline benchmark, e.g. exit poll or other usability study for communications vehicles and messages (6/5/08)
- 7.7. Educational component to Town Meeting to include specifically how to make a motion (6/5/08)
- 7.8. Seven sign posts and sandwich boards may need to be supplemented to adequately communicate critical opportunities for citizen participation (6/5/08)
- 7.9. How to expand the use of MetaMail (6/5/08)

Respectfully submitted, Leila Fecho, member of the Communications Advisory Committee.