

City of Huntington Woods
Communication Advisory Committee
June 16, 2020
Minutes

The remote meeting called to order at 7 p.m.

Present: Erin Walker, Jeff Samoray, Chera Reid, Ilene Cantor, Will Butler, Amy Sullivan, Lynne Golodner, Joe Rozell

Absent: Lauren Willens, David Welch

Joe Rozell, city commission liaison to the committee, introduced himself and offered himself as a resource for concerns or needs.

There were no changes to the agenda and the February minutes were approved as written.

Amy noted that the Communication Audit had been shared in February and requests for additional information after reviewing the audit were included in the agenda packet. On the question why Commissioner Olsman requested a blog, he thought it was a good opportunity to talk about the city. Also included in the agenda packet were statistics on what website pages are visited most.

Amy asked if there were any questions on the info that had been provided. There were none.

Amy provided clarification from City Commission for direction on a communication survey – they are looking for feedback from residents on how they prefer to receive information from the city and what kind of information is important.

Discussion: what does the committee want to see in a communication survey?

Ilene: from a data standpoint, where do people go for their up-to-the-minute HW info. Outside of FB and an occasional email, Ilene feels there are gaps from an information standpoint. Simple and easy questions should be asked.

Lynne offered perspective on surveys, mentioned the pool survey and we received immediate responses.

Erin Walker: best survey responses come from being clear about how quick the survey it is, how much time it's going to take them to answer.

Ilene: make it quick and easy and accessible/interactive.

Will: understanding benchmark of current communication platforms would be helpful to know as a committee member, be aware of duplicative efforts to survey residents on communication in the past.

Chera: consider a survey to particular resident groups that we are especially interested to hear from, to get a sense of who the respondents are, certain subsets of residents we believe are harder to reach, be mindful of that.

Will: make sure we are reaching different segments of population in the city, which platforms does the survey go out on, affects who responds, who receives.

Jeff: keep survey limited to encourage high response rate, would people like push notifications on city news, it seems like people are more conditioned to receive push notifications for different news items, only concern is making sure we are able to reach everybody and there are a lot of seniors who are probably aren't getting push notifications on their phones.

Chera: in the last few months, are there things that city leaders have learned about effective communication? In the COVID context... is there feedback? Questions? Sensing what is working for people or what is not?

Joe Rozell: looking at different mediums for communication to fill gaps, frequency of communication was an issue, we have all these tools but folks aren't always aware of them or using them, when he's paid to boost the eblast on FB, people have signed up. Could the city look for ways to boost sign-ups for the different platforms? Include in the water bill?

Jeff: What percentage of residents subscribe to the e-blast? 1,200 people have signed up but may not all be residents and may have multiple emails in the same household.

Lynne found cities that did communication surveys, they're rather lengthy. Committee would you like to see what other communities have done and pull out some questions that would be appropriate for HW. Or should Lynne and Amy go through and pick out the ones that are most relevant? Amy could send links to committee to review and offer input.

Ilene: wants to know if people participate in/subscribe to Next Door, Facebook, etc. – is that where they get their HW info?

Jeff: find out how many residents are going to NextDoor for news, even if not official.

Will: NextDoor is not reliable as a primary news source ... would love to take a look at the links to other community surveys. Wants to know which channels/platforms the committee really wants to focus on for improving or changing depending on the results.

Amy: target groups – what specific groups was Chera mentioning? Seniors? Others?

Chera: programming for parents (school age kids, under school age), people with disabilities (especially physical). Consider at the same time as the survey, getting a baseline understanding of priorities that commissioners might lift up that would benefit from strong and thorough communications. Would the City Commission benefit from getting feedback from residents on prioritizing issues/projects?

Amy: who would create the list of city priorities for survey respondents to rank?

Chera: the city commission – maybe use the Master Plan update as a test case to do robust communication, collect some data, and see how it goes.

Ilene: should we ask is there something that is not being communicated? That you would like to see? Suggestion line or box. Be prepared for feedback on a variety of experiences not communication-related.

Jeff: wouldn't hurt to do an open-ended question – someone might have a really good idea that we haven't tried yet.

Will: as long as it is optional end comment box.

Erin: make it optional and not included in the count of total questions to answer.

Amy: will send out other communication surveys to the committee, then the committee will work on designing the survey, how to distribute, targeting audiences, parallel questions, at future meetings. The communication audit itself, we haven't looked at it since February – should we keep it on the agenda and go back to look at other suggestions/recommendations that were made and work on a couple of items at the same time? Or just start with the survey, establish a baseline, and revisit the audit for other suggestions?

Chera: wants to do both

Erin: both is interesting

Amy: this means committee needs to reread the audit and come to the July meeting with options for what to tackle.

Will: I also think we have the capacity to do two things at once and get the survey out, but also review the audit and look at something else.

Jeff: I think both and perhaps come to the July meeting with suggestions of what action items to pursue from the audit.

Ilene: say yes to both.

Jeff: the city has done a pretty good job with COVID communications, communicated clearly and promptly and quickly.

Joe: is the committee looking into re-establishing the mobile app for the city? Let the city know app? Could push out notifications through the app and also people could report a pothole or an ordinance issue, snap a photo and report in the app.

Lynne needs to dig out research on apps from February.

A resident designed an app – HW website on a phone – wasn't interactive or two-way as it could be. Need a more intuitive app but not cookie cutter

Will: when I lived in Detroit, they launched an improved Detroit app, focused on complaints and reports, started putting bus routes on it, can try to find out who the developer was – he can send it to us.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.