

Media Communications Advisory Board

Thursday, March 21, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM

A bimonthly meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Media Communications Advisory Board was convened on Monday, November 26, 2018 at 7:00PM in the Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania.

Members Present: Sharon Harvey, Mark Cratin, Crystal Taylor

Members Absent: Lisa Litzinger-Drayton

Also present: Sean Halbom, Asst. Township Manager
Fran McCusker, Township Supervisor

2. Approval of February 2019 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Mark, seconded by Sharon.

3. WTV Status Update – Report provided by Stan Finegold, WTV Station Manager

Sean reported that WTV is in the process of replacing equipment that was purchased in 2009. The Township has hired a college student consultant to give objective opinions about technology choices. An inventory of equipment was made and the list is being reviewed to identify extraneous equipment. We will then prioritize which needed items will be replaced first.

The audio system will not be replaced this year. Replacing that equipment would not help online listeners because the new HD equipment would still run through standard definition equipment to be broadcast. For that reason, we intend to replace the broadcast equipment first. WTV will be moving toward shorter, more concise videos going forward.

Sharon asked how long the student is on our payroll. Sean explained that he is paid as an hourly consultant but that we have him for at least several weeks, possibly months. The same student was hired to research, design, and assemble WTV's video editing stations. That project came in on time and under budget.

Mark asked if the Township works with Plymouth Whitemarsh students as volunteers or interns. Sean explained that the idea was raised, but the school board declined to participate. Mark went on to say many of the students at his high school work with these programs, and that there is interest in the subject among high school students. Sean explained that WTV does not have staffing issues, and their priorities are not

geared toward education but rather generating new content for the Township. Sharon suggested that if the subject arises in the future, we should ask Mark to speak on behalf of MCAB about the potential value of student involvement. Supervisor McCusker added that it would be a great way to save the Township money on manpower.

Eli Glick offered public comment that community building is an important aspect and that we should be encouraging involvement from the community.

4. Announcements

Website Redesign – We are now in our first month of the redesign, we had begun three months earlier but our project manager was non-responsive. A new project manager was assigned a month ago and we are now on a 5-7 month timeline, possibly finishing around October. Changes will be mainly aesthetic in nature, but we are also exploring new features requested by the public such as a single area for forms and a constant contact system.

Sean encouraged MCAB to visit the borough of Lansdale’s website to look at their features, specifically a centralized search bar on the home page. Another goal is to keep all information within three clicks of the home page.

Whitemarsh Living

Copies of the latest edition of Whitemarsh Living are available and were delivered late-February. Sharon asked if we have received any feedback, Sean explained that he had not but would check with the receptionists.

Eli Glick asked if there is a way to “opt-out” of Whitemarsh Living to reduce the environmental burden. He added that this would be a good way to let residents know we are concerned for the environment.

EAB Partnership re: Use of Social Media

The Environmental Advisory Board has asked the MCAB to provide guidance regarding social media usage. EAB would like advice regarding platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This topic was brought up before their latest board member was appointed, who, is very social media savvy. This request may no longer be necessary for that reason.

MCAB members all agreed they were not aware of any past social media guidance designed by MCAB, but would be interested in working with EAB if they remain interested.

Ryan Hurley asked if we know specifically what sort of assistance they are seeking because there are many best practices widely available online. Sean reported that EAB has taken on a lot of projects in the past few months, he believed they are looking for any and all advice. Sean also reported that they have a hash tag (#GreenMarsh) that is getting out there. Sean reported that he will follow up with EAB to gather more details.

Retention of Communications Consultant – Gailey Murray

A meeting has been scheduled for this consultant to meet with Fran and Lisa to discuss MCABs role in Township Communications. The Board discussed who among them may be available to meet.

Press Coverage

Ready for 100 made the Time Herald's front page on March 18th. Shredding Day was also covered in an online story by the Times Herald.

Introduction of MCAB board member applicant

Ryan Hurley, a resident and social media strategist, was recommended for appointment to the MCAB. A motion was made by Sharon, seconded by Mark, the motion passed unanimously.

Change of the May Meeting Schedule

A motion was made to move the May meeting day from Memorial Day to June 3rd, 2019.

Public Comment

Ryan Hurley offered public comment regarding the website redesign. He asked if there was an surveying done about resident's desires for the new design. Sean explained that we do get metrics and analytics through the site, but that he is not well versed with the program.

Ryan clarified that he was asking about topic information to which Sean replied that we do have a keyword search results from the webpage; however, those results do not include traffic that came by way of search engines to inner areas within the page. Ryan added that he too would like to see an opt-out for Whitemarsh Living and making the digital version more widely available.

Eli Glick added that the public relations piece of showing collaboration between EAB and MCAB is important. He believes the amount of junk mail in circulation is a problem and that we could better utilize online tools like surveymoney to find solutions. Eli added that he hopes the website redesign won't be used as a way of padding ourselves on the back prior to the next election.

5. Adjournment

There being no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm. Motion was made by Mark, seconded by Sharon, and passed unanimously.

6. Next Meeting – June 3rd, 2019 @ 7:00PM.