

**Town of Somerset**  
**Communications Committee Meeting Agenda**  
**Monday, November 13, 2023**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom**

1. Call to Order
  - a. Attendance: Committee: Leslie Caplan, John Barry, Ilene Heller, Joanne Steller  
Town and Council: Debbie Heller (Council), Kumar Vaswani (Chair, Public Safety Committee), Matt Trollinger (Town Manager), EJ Hardwick (Deputy Town Manager)
  - b. Approved Minutes from Last Meeting (October, 2023)
  - c. Approved with amendment the Agenda of November Meeting
  - d. Announcements
  - e. Date for next meeting: December 11, 5:00 p.m.
2. New Town website
  - a. Report from Deputy Town Manager – EJ has reorganized the layout for committee pages and continues to work on other refinements.
  - b. Discussion of Committee page on the Town website
    - i. The committee reviewed Chair Caplan’s draft as well as the content the Deputy Town Manager had prepared for use in the new layout, and agreed upon several changes.
    - ii. Remove section on agendas and minutes
    - iii. Reformat “supported the development of the current Town website” so that the sub-bullets are under it
    - iv. Add as a main bullet under Accomplishments: review social media policies.
    - v. Change “Materials” to Publications or Materials produced by the Committee
    - vi. Add “periodically” to Preparing the Resource Guide accomplishment
    - vii. In the content about Town Journal: Delete the 2018 Submissions Guide and add Leslie’s brief “how to submit” paragraph
    - viii. Remove periods after the names of Committee members
    - ix. Add a button on home page to the Resource Guide
3. Discussion of privacy/confidentiality issues for the Town Journal:
  - a. Leslie’s request to Town Council and the Mayor expressing concerns about the use of children’s photos in the Town Journal was referred to the next Council work session.
  - b. At that session, questions this committee raised prompted a larger discussion among Council members, the Mayor, and the Town’s legal counsel regarding protection of personal information and photographs in any Town activity that is published in print or on the web site.
  - c. Currently, there is no overarching Town policy governing such privacy issues generally and specifically whether the Journal and its archives should be available behind password protection for use only to residents on the web site. The Town’s attorney noted that the Journal is a public document paid for with government funds, and must offer public accessibility.
  - d. In the work session, this matter, including a review of relevant sections of the Town Code, was referred to the Town counsel. A town-wide policy is forthcoming at an as yet to be set date.
  - e. Committee discussion concluded there is value to keeping the Journal public as long as permission is obtained from anyone pictured or mentioned by name with contact information. A town-wide permission agreement would be helpful
  - f. Next steps: Matt agreed to speak with the Town attorney to offer further thoughts from the committee and request that the attorney provide an update on this at the next Council work session.
4. Discussion of coordination/consistency of calendars across Town publications

- a. Matt acknowledges there is inconsistency among calendar information in the Journal (longer lead time) email blasts, and Town website. He pledged to keep a more consistent overall calendar that incorporates dates from various sources while trying to improve reports from volunteer committees that do not meet regularly. He also will try technologies that keep track of updates for the Town Announcements, especially as relates to Town Social events.
  - b. The committee will drop this item from future discussions
5. Resource Guide/Directory 2024 update
  - a. Ilene and Leslie have reviewed the current Resource Guide for updates and will work to put together all of their changes for the next edition. [Note: John Barry notified Leslie on November 20 that he would be submitting revisions to the history section of the Resource Guide.]
  - b. For the Directory, Matt reports that Linda regularly updates residents' information on newcomers, deaths, and moves. To double check information, Matt proposed the Town office will send out block-by-block emails asking residents to review names and addresses for their block and to report back any changes in their own or their neighbors' listings to the office for a final check.
  - c. Leslie will check on and report the deadline for submitting changes content in anticipation of a February 2024 publication of the new Directory and Resource Guide.
6. Town Journal update
  - a. The "For Your Reference" section, now available on the website, will continue to be published in 2024. Dropping it was a consideration.
7. Review of social media policy
  - a. Leslie expressed concern that our draft policy did not contain typically-included language that would govern the behavior of Town staff.
  - b. The Deputy Manager explained that Council has approved this social media policy draft. It is based on Montgomery County's policy and was approved after edits by the Town attorney according to law that governs these communications that are a matter of public record.
8. Lecture series
  - a. John has had useful discussions with one prospective series speaker (Amy Hoang-Wrona), and is pursuing contact for discussion with a second (Jeff Nussbaum).
  - b. Further details are forthcoming
9. New Committee Members
  - a. The committee continues to entertain suggestions for a new committee member to fill the seat vacated by Barbara, noting that new voices on the committee are welcome and participation centers on monthly meetings. Suggested members are sent to the Mayor who appoint with consent from Council.
  - b. Joanne will continue discussion with a prospect. Matt will consider also.
10. Adjournment: 6:18