

Town of Somerset
Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 8, 2024
4:00 p.m.
Zoom

1. Call to Order
 - a. Attendance:
 - i. Committee members: Leslie Caplan, Ilene Heller, Joanne Steller, Cinzia Furlanetto
 - ii. Town staff and Council members: Matt Trollinger (Town Manager), , Debbie Heller (Council member)
 - iii. Residents: Kumar Vaswani (Chair, Public Safety Committee)
 - b. Announcements: none
 - c. Date for next meeting: February 12, 2024, 5:00 pm
2. Town website and social media
 - a. Report from Town Manager
 - i. Deputy Town Manager has been updating the site with weekly announcements.
 - ii. The next effort will focus on correcting the calendar, which is currently offline because Council meetings were showing up on committee meetings.
 - iii. Website will also include a list of Council resolutions that have been passed, grouped by various recommending committees
 - iv. The Town is starting to post more frequently on social media. Possible next step is to involve Youth Council in social media activities, for discussion at first Youth Council meeting
 - v. Ilene requested the Committee receive a report on social media analytics, citing as a welcome example the recent post detailing the Town's 2023 top ten accomplishments.
3. Privacy/confidentiality issues for the Town Journal and Town social media: update
 - a. The Town Manager has talked to the Town Attorney, regarding the consent form he had written. The Town Attorney had written the document the Committee reviewed last month as a pro forma consent form to cover a broad range of needs, with the idea that Town Council could formulate appropriate policy and guidelines for its use.
 - b. Last month, the Committee posed a number of questions and concerns, that could be reframed into policy considerations for the Council's review on privacy and use of photos or identification in Town publications.
 - i. ACTION: At its next public meeting (February), the committee will develop its questions into a set of recommendations for Council's review.
 - c. The committee agreed that in the meantime, the use of photos of children in social media posts/release should be discontinued.
 - d. The Town Manager has not yet looked into other jurisdictions' policy on photo use in their media, but will do so.
4. Resource Guide/Directory 2024 update
 - a. The committee reviewed the edited list of revisions
 - b. At the suggestion of Kumar Vaswani, Leslie will add an item in the February Town Journal calling for any changes to the directory or Resource Guide, to be submitted by February 29
 - c. With the invitation of public comment on the Resource Guide, its printing and delivery likely will take place later this year (April)
 - d. The committee expressed interest in conducting a survey of residents to find out if combining the Directory and Resource Guide in one publication, or providing it only online, is serving the Town as the Committee intended.

5. Town Journal update
 - a. This month, unusually, residents received printed edition arrived before the online version, an anomaly because of Town staff holiday vacations.
 - b. Therefore, in a discussion on community policing that occurred on the community listserv, some residents had not received the Journal issue containing the second of two articles on community policing. The discussion underscored the importance of two versions, print and online, and their receipt by residents closer together in time.
 - c. The committee voiced an interest in receiving data on the number of clicks on the Journal on the Town website, and about the number of recipients of the hardcopy version of the Journal
6. Lecture series
 - a. The committee delayed the discussion of this project until John Barry is available.
7. New Committee Members -- No new prospects have been identified or come forward. Sloane's term has expired. The committee now has five members. This is an acceptable size for a committee, per the Town's Committee Guide.
 - a. The committee agreed that the Town Manager will include in his Committee report to the Mayor that Communications is working well with five actively engaged members.
8. Other Business: none
9. Adjournment: 5:12