

Technology & Communications Commission
MINUTES
January 3, 2023

Commission Members Present:

Peter Hill, Chair
John Binkley, Vice Chair
Aaron Nadler
Richard Jackson
Katherine Johnson
Chris Grandjean

Council Liaison Present: Neil Steinberg

Staff Present: Jakub Jedrzejczak
John Callahan
Matthew Michau
Andrew Ip

- Call to Order 7:00PM
- Establish Quorum
 - Quorum present
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Approval of Minutes
 - December 7, 2022, *Mr. Grandjean Motion, 2nd Mr. Jackson, motion to approve passes 6-0.*
- Petitioners – none
- Old Business – Digital Town Hall – Proposed Budget Enhancement
 - Digital Town Hall (DTH) was introduced by Mr. Jedrzejczak who explained that this initiative was voted priority no.2 by the departments in the recent directors retreat in Ida Lee. Emphasizing that DTH is not an IT initiative, but a resident-driven one. The department's senior systems analyst, Mr. Michau and Mr. Ip, were presented, and Mr. Michau proceeded to the DTH PowerPoint presentation.
 - **Mr. Michau** presented DTH; what does it mean, why it's necessary, and how it can be obtained.
 - **Mr. Michau** explained that digital government is innovative, supportive, and efficient. That the more accessible it's to residents, more data is collected, and thus, increasing evaluation capacity which leads to change. The general idea is that the more IT, there's more resident connectivity; however, it's imperative to use the

- proper tools with the proper job.
- A new full-time system integrator will be necessary with three core responsibilities: execution of platform design, data centralization and building cross silo connections, and the maintenance and enhancement of the platform as usage grows and changes. Secondly, funding. A first-year amount of \$200,000 will be for a vendor partner to include the development of a Town ID and research; for subsequent years, an annual amount of \$75,000 to continue the development of the DTH platform.
 - The presentation concluded with a demo of what DTH could look like.
 - The floor was opened to the Committee for questions.
 - **Mr. Binkley** suggested the replacement of the research company, Granicus, and asked if the Town ID will be a “push or a pull,” and what will be the metrics of success.
 - The suggestion of changing the current service provider, Granicus, were affirmatively noted by **Mr. Michau**; and **Mr. Jedrzejczak** elaborated on the efforts toward the development of a Town ID, referring to current market options like “ID Me” and the current ID systems implemented in multiple Town departments (i.e., utilities and parks and recreation). Mr. Jedrzejczak noted that at one point, an ID above all other IDs will need to be established.
 - **Mr. Michau** responded that it’s more of a “pull.” Elaborating that linking the current, internal Town IDs (i.e., library cards) to the new Town ID is a one-time authentication process; that the efforts will be explored between an external/3rd party and internal data.
 - **Mr. Binkley** asked if there are any metrics of success in place.
 - **Mr. Michau** stated that this can be achieved by knowing how many users have the ID, the levels of interactivity, and DTH’s sustainability year-to-year.
 - **Mr. Jedrzejczak’s** vision on the measurement of success of DTH is the fulfillment of residents’ expectations by reaching their objective (i.e., paying a parking ticket) faster and with less clicks, departmental collaboration, the streamlining of information, and the systematic capacity to replicate a function.
 - **Mr. Hill** pointed out that since data collection will increase, so should privacy and security and suggested to look at Maryland’s Howard County’s GIS system as a model to possibly present the DTH idea to Council as a “finish product.”
 - **Mr. Jedrzejczak** elaborated on the direction the Town will take regarding the DTH initiative. He explained that the Town will “find the right platform that kind of enables me to plug-in all this umbrella functionality and take advantage of

somebody else's security and ID management.”

- **Mr. Jedrzejczak** stated that looking into other counties' ID implementation process is useful, but outsourcing the research efforts of the entire project will be necessary; as there are firms that already specialize in research and can present to the Town a “success story.”
- **Mr. Binkley** further suggested to hire a privacy and security vendor independent from the integrator vendor to optimize check and balances. Additionally, to ensure that the traditional approach (face-to-face interaction) of doing business in the Town is retained; that is, the implementation of DTH should be an alternative to doing Town business.
- **Mr. Michau** supported the idea of keeping the traditional way of doing business in Town, anticipating a higher use of digital functions through the DTH initiative.
- “This is not a new idea, perhaps it's new to government, but it's not a new idea” – **Mr. Jedrzejczak** added. Using the analogy of Safeway's self-checkout lanes as an alternative for clients, DTH can very well be an option for Town residents, providing an alternative to in-person services.
- **Mr. Binkley** supported the idea and path towards a DTH.
- **Mr. Hill** used the Safeway self-checkout analogy with a best practice model: having a person to assist those who need assistance during the self-checkout process.
- **Mr. Jedrzejczak** stated that he envisions a new phone system that will automatically connect with those DTH users who need assistance.
- **Mr. Hill** supported the use of a new phone system as part of the DTH initiative and stressed the importance of having training consistency with the future phone operators.
- **Mr. Jedrzejczak** expressed his excitement with the DTH initiative, as the no. 2 priority out of 140, and anticipated that this initiative will be a priority goal for the Council this year.
- **Mr. Steinberg** asked when will this proposal be coming to Council for consideration, for the FY24 budget cycle? Mr. Jedrzejczak responded “yes” and expanded on the internal budget process.
- **Mr. Steinberg** suggested to use another presentation for Council and provided presentation improvement tips, specifically in the budget section. Particularly, to show figures for the system integrator and to itemize what the \$200,000 pays for. Per Steinberg, asking “how can this be used by as broad a sector of the population as possible” is a big part of the equation.

- **Mr. Jedrzejczak** agreed with Mr. Steinberg’s comments and explained that budget details were submitted with some description, but more time will be needed to explain a complex project – 10 minutes is not enough. That the \$200,000 will be to build the platform to help build an application to include the ID. The ongoing \$75,000 is for maintenance and support through the new hire to work with the vendor. Mr. Jedrzejczak further elaborated that one of the primary tasks of the system integrator will be to ensure the Town lists all the services it provides and make these services accessible to its residents- which currently it is not the case. Nonetheless, Mr. Jedrzejczak said, the Town has successfully centralized the payment system that spreads throughout all its websites.
- **Mr. Steinberg** advised that if more time is needed to present, if request, it will be granted.
- The DTH presentation closed with an introduction of the latest addition to the IT Team, Mr. Ip, and his collaborations to the Town to include the theoretical introduction China’s IT advancement in the realm of a digitalized country.
- Subcommittee Reports
 - Economic Development/Mason Enterprise Center Partnership - None
- New Business
- 2022 Annual Report
 - **Mr. Callahan** suggested to present to Council an information item, with or without a presentation, during the last meeting in February, as an overview of what the Commission did last year.
 - **Mr. Hill** supported the idea to include a presentation because it’s engaging and a good vehicle to probe questions from the Council.
 - **Mr. Jedrzejczak** offered to work with **Mr. Binkley** on the presentation of the fully implemented projects of 2022 such as FMA and Last Pass.
 - **Mr. Hill** commented that reading the minutes and speaking to Mr. Jedrzejczak is a good place to start when drafting the annual report.
- Election of Officers
 - **Mr. Callahan** stated that Article IVA in the Commission’s bylaws indicates that in the January meeting the officers are elected; but that it can be paused until next meeting to have all seven commissioners.
 - **Mr. Hill** recommended to wait until next meeting and suggested a motion.

- **Mr. Jackson** *motioned to move the election of officers to February Meeting; 2nd Ms. Johnson 6-0*
- **Mr. Hill** recommended to Mr. Binkley to think about what position he might want to take to have some idea and be ready for next meeting.
- Meeting Calendar
- **Mr. Callahan** noted that the meeting of July 4 will need to be rescheduled for either July 3rd or July 12th. The second meeting rescheduling will be for the month of October, as requested by Council.
- **Mr. Hill** suggested to decide meeting calendar rescheduling during the next meeting.
- **Mr. Callahan** agreed to include this information in the next agenda as old business and to provide dates; and reminded that it is required by law to have a meeting each month.
- Commissioner Comments
 - **Mr. Binkley** expressed his appreciation for all the work and care Mr. Hill contributed to the Town.
 - **Mr. Hill** commented that he feels it was a worthwhile exercise bringing to the Town his IT expertise of over forty years; that eight years ago compared to where IT stands now, it's night and day. That the way the Town handled the pandemic was successful in part by the Commission and Mr. Jedrzejczak's vision.
- Council Rep Comments
 - **Mr. Steinberg** thanked everybody back and commented on the department's progress as new staff members are introduced each meeting.
- IT Director Comments
 - **Mr. Jedrzejczak** thanked Mr. Hill for his years of commitment, spirit of support, and leadership.
- Adjourn 8:16 PM *Mr. Binkley motion to adjourn, 2nd Mr. Jackson. Motion to adjourn passes 6-0.*

Next Meeting, February 7, 2023, 7:00 PM.