

Technology & Communications Commission
MINUTES
April 12, 2023

Commission Members Present: John Binkley, Chair
Richard Jackson, Vice Chair
Aaron Nadler
Rob Fulcer
Katherine Johnson
Chris Grandjean
Brandon Garay

Council Liaison Absent: Neil Steinberg

Staff Present: Jakub Jedrzejczak
John Callahan

1. Call to Order 7:00PM
2. Establish Quorum
 - a. Quorum present.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes – March 7, 2023
 - a. Motion to approve Grandjean, 2nd Nadler Passes 6-0.
5. Petitioners - None
6. **Old Business** –

Mr. Jedrzejczak thanked the Commission for attending the commissioners’ meeting and advised that the presentation of the annual report to the Town Council went well.

Mr. Jackson commented on the success of the above-mentioned events, highlighting that the Airport Commission got a reprieve that the remote tower will be ongoing until a permanent one is built.

7. **New Business**

- a. Digital Town Hall Technology and Communications Commission Public Input – Discussion

Mr. Jedrzejczak quoted former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and requested the Commission to focus on things that are unknown when preparing to discuss digital town hall (DTH).

Mr. Jedrzejczak stated that the Town is entering this new, townwide initiative called DTH with good support from leadership. Hoping that it be one of two major items for the next upcoming budget to be supported by the Town Council. Using the analogy of “zero trust product” in the cybersecurity world; he explained that nothing exists, that it’s the

approach taken within the organization to meeting its criteria. As such, DTH is this wholistic view of all departments.

Mr. Jedrzejczak explained that his idea needs to be circulated among all directors to convey the initiative of DTH, and that on May 17th a presentation will take place at Ida Lee Recreation Center for all directors to explain what DTH is. More than an iPhone application, it's a different, less eccentric approach to technology that the Town should take; thinking less department and more Town, he said.

According to **Mr. Jedrzejczak**, residents today are faced with 500 URLs on the Town's website; stressing the need for a different approach and envisioning a webpage with a chat option (with a live person behind) where the user will be routed to the correct department. Further suggesting that partnering with the Commission to formulate the best public outreach method and what questions to ask is imperative.

[inaudible comment/question from Mr. Binkley] [12:33]

Mr. Jedrzejczak stated that IT knows the problems, but not the experience and how to keep the questions clear. Stating that *this* approach, reaching out to residents and then coming back with valuable feedback, is truly democratic. Requesting from the Commission to take the lead in Leesburg resident outreach through a survey on DTH.

Mr. Binkley asked if there are any metrics to measure website use broken down by user categories along with a search history. Stating that it's a good start and that a survey is only an option.

Mr. Binkley expanded that it's a good plan to complete a survey before an open, public session and getting representation from stakeholders. For the latter, talking to the Economic Development Commission or someone from planning / permitting to potentially join this effort might be a viable alternative.

Ms. Johnson pointed out that surveys are typically completed by only five percent of the target population who are either really happy or really mad. **Mr. Jedrzejczak** agreed with this comment and advised that he will get the needed stats from the Town's PIO.

Mr. Grandjean concurred that it's a good idea to first gather data before outreach and to focus on current services being used.

Mr. Nadler asked what are the departments with most business/foot traffic.

Mr. Fulcer pointed out that there is a segment of Leesburg that cannot go digital since technology is not accessible to everyone.

Mr. Binkley asked Mr. Fulcer if he had any idea on how to reach this population.

Mr. Fulcer suggested a survey possibly through Survey Monkey, the quarterly newsletter, and/or the Town's webpage.

Mr. Binkley, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Nadler continued the discussion and suggested having a poster with a QR code at libraries and at Ida Lee Recreation Center; also, a QR code access for those who attend the first Friday of the month and the Visitors Center in Market Station- a good venue to target visitors' input.

Mr. Jedrzejczak embraced the idea of serving all (residents, businesses, and visitors) and narrated that during a meeting with airport director Scott Coffman, it was suggested "how about the businesses that are outside of Leesburg, but do business in Leesburg?" The distinction is very good because we can have different views and different needs, said Mr. Jedrzejczak.

According to **Mr. Jedrzejczak**, research showed that some processes are not connected to the Town's payment system - something the Town is looking to address with DTH. Further adding that to assist users with technical challenges, the Town can have an assistant, someone that can potentially sit with the individual using an iPad.

Mr. Nadler suggested two additional features: to have multilingual options and make sure it runs well in a mobile device; pointing out that people who don't have a PC can use a smartphone.

Mr. Fulcer pointed out that unlike Parks and Recreation, here [with DTH's initiative] virtually everybody will agree with internet accessibility and navigation-friendly features to address their needs.

Mr. Jedrzejczak advised that he has prepared 100 questions for the directors to obtain detailed feedback on how they envision DTH; elaborating that unlike a building in the real world, with DTH you can envision infinite options; you are not limited by real estate or humans.

Mr. Binkley asked if a poster can be made.

Mr. Jedrzejczak advised that he will report back on the Commission's budget and added that using the in-house public works' shop to make the poster(s) is a viable alternative.

Mr. Binkley reiterated his outreach to the Airport, Planning, and Economic Development Commissions with the possibility of also reaching out to the Parks and Recreation Commission to support this pre-DTH preliminary study composed of surveying and potential face-to-face interaction with all stakeholders.

Mr. Fulcer supported this idea, stating that people attend the facility daily; and that the parks and recreation commission talked to him about some of the things they envision.

Mr. Binkley verbalized his outreach plan and asked about the timeframe to have the survey questions ready.

Ms. Johnson suggested producing only five survey questions to keep it short and engaging.

Mr. Binkley agreed and added that the questions should be concise.

Mr. Jedrzejczak emphasized that all should be finalized in about six months before the new budget is prepared.

Mr. Binkley suggested public outreach (i.e., a story about DTH) before the survey is released to the public.

Mr. Jackson suggested preparing readers for the upcoming survey by posting a notice in the Town's newsletter; anticipating that the primary service/function that people will need will be in the "payment" category.

Mr. Jedrzejczak acknowledged that the website today is not user friendly and that it's very expensive to make an application with a good navigation system; however, he assured that the Town will improve without having to spend millions of dollars, like Amazon, to study customers' behaviors. Targeting the most frequently used services and overall confusions (is it County or Town?) is a good start. With DTH they waste less time and are less frustrated; knowing that there is a live person that can chat with them or open a video call, he said.

Mr. Binkley requested the heat map and search history for the next meeting.

Mr. Jedrzejczak agreed and advised that he will also provide some frequently asked questions. Noting that it's a good idea to gather information from the receptionist – asking questions like: how is the call traffic directed, what *is* the traffic, what is the purpose, why are they coming to the finance window, is there a fee associated with paying online?

Mr. Callahan suggested extending these questions to Ida Lee Recreation Center and to Leesburg PD because there's a lot of foot traffic in these departments.

Mr. Jedrzejczak agreed and further suggested also expanding the questions to the utility department because they have the busiest phone lines; a customer service department with lots of interaction.

Mr. Jackson stated that the whole concept of DTH is outreach; to post an attractive sign/poster on the hallway of Ida Lee Recreation Center and the Rust Library where people see and take the survey using the link. "Does Survey Monkey cost anything?" he asked.

Mr. Jedrzejczak advised that the Town has a license to use Survey Monkey. Further adding that there are a lot of services that people don't know about because they are buried in propaganda.

The action plan moving forward according to **Mr. Binkley** is to make posters, obtain a heat map and searches, and in the next meeting for people come prepared with possible survey questions.

Mr. Callahan clarified that the Commission does have a budget, but it's all for personnel costs- transferred from IT's budget.

"I will clarify that for the next meeting... IT has a budget, and this is an IT-approved initiative, so I will find resources," said **Mr. Jedrzejczak**.

Mr. Binkley reiterated that in the next meeting items will be assigned for everyone to have something to do and start pulling all the pieces together.

Mr. Grandjean asked if Survey Monkey is linear or multipath, to which **Mr. Jedrzejczak** replied that it can be as complex as imagined, that all he needs is a Word document and he will make it happen.

Mr. Callahan noted that the next meeting is May 2nd, and that screening *who* (resident, business owner, or visitor) will be completing the survey will be key.

Mr. Jackson asked if a sign at the entrance to the Town inviting people to take the survey is a possibility in addition to an ad in a newspaper and social media.

Mr. Jedrzejczak deferred the answers to the Town's PIO who might join the Commission meeting soon and urged commissioners to be ready for the Town's next event which will serve as a great opportunity to get input; if needed, have staff walk around with iPad to complete the survey.

8. Commissioner Comments

Mr. Binkley expressed his excitement about DTH saying that it's a great opportunity for the Town, staff, and the Commission.

Mr. Nadler suggested a strategic approach to the creation of QR codes as these are placed among parks and other public spaces.

Mr. Fulcer advised that the Parks and Recreation Commission envisions that these codes will guide users to other places, but also provide the history or background of the parks.

Mr. Jedrzejczak agreed with Mr. Nadler's comment and added that today, when departments are working, there is no coordination or consistent way of developing a QR code. "This could be part of the DTH initiative that unifies the approach...I can definitely raise that as an example during the directors meeting," he said.

9. Council Rep Comments.

None [Mr. Steinberg was absent].

10. IT Director Comments

Mr. Jedrzejczak expressed excitement about DTH as a three to five year initiative with deliverables (having a unified ID for users and having an Amazon-like experience where users can add goods and services to their cart) in the first year; an ongoing effort that just started and will most likely outlast staff efforts. Thanking the Commission for their support in working directly with the residents while IT supports the Commission and the internal operation.

11. Adjourn 8:00 pm. Motion Binkley, 2nd Nadler Passes 7-0

Next Meeting, May 2, 2023, 7:00 pm.