

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING**

**Kiawah Island Municipal Center
Downstairs Conference Room**

February 17, 2015; 3:00 PM

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order:** Mr. Weaver called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.
- II. FOIA:** Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.
- III. Roll Call:**
Present: Craig Weaver, Chairman
Frances Boyd
Joyce Keegel
Mary Kasman
Linda Dove

Also Present: Tumiko Rucker
Stephanie Braswell-Edgerton
- IV. Approval of Minutes:**
A. Communication Committee Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2014

Mrs. Kasman motioned to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2014 Communications Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dove and was unanimously passed.
- V. Citizen Comments:**
None
- VI. Old Business:**
A. Social Media Status

Mr. Weaver indicated that he wanted to talk about the committee, future challenges of the town's communications and member expectations.

Mr. Weaver stated in the last several Committee meeting there had been an ongoing discussion of social media. He asked Ms. Braswell to give the Committee an update on the Town's social media. Ms. Braswell gave members an update on the Town's Facebook and Twitter noting that there had not been any use of Instagram. Committee members discussed social media; how social media is used, and who is the audience who is using social media. Committee members discussed if the residents on Kiawah have a working knowledge of how to use social media and agreed that there is a need to improve the knowledge base.

Ms. Kasman noted that she had been approached by several residents asking if the Town would hold classes on how to use Facebook. She suggested that at the next meeting members bring their computer devices and engage in a "how to" discussion on Town's Social media and how to use it. Mr. Weaver indicated that with the committee having a better knowledge of the workings of social media would allow for a better discussion of how to use social media to get information to the Community.

Mr. Weaver asked if there is anything that committee members can do to help with Ms. Braswell's responsibilities of social media content. Ms. Braswell indicated that posting items to the Facebook page or forwarding items to her would be a great help. Members discussed posting items, copyrights, communication policies and favoritism issues with individuals posting to the Town social media. Ms. Braswell indicated that most communication polices deal with responses to negative postings. Members discussed the difference between and individual and Town endorsement.

VII. New Business:

A. Development of 2015 Committee Role, Priorities and Work Plan

Mr. Weaver stated that in preparing for his role as chairman of the Communications Committee he needed to get a sense as what had been done in the past. He reviewed the Committee's charter, minutes and had sought out feedback from members, staff and some council members

Mr. Weaver observed that the Committee had made important contributions over the past couple years but that it seemed that committee members are looking for a clear direction and focus going forward.

Mr. Weaver noted that there was a question of whether there was even a need for a Communications Committee. He listed items in which the Committee and members have a role;

- ↓ The Town Council and staff need the communications committee;
- ↓ Provides a community perspective and "voice"
- ↓ Council and staff benefit from timely and unbiased Input and critique of town's messaging
- ↓ Can bring some specialized communications capability or experience
- ↓ Source of additional resources
- ↓ Committee involvement needs to be a worthwhile activity for its members.

Committee members agreed with Mr. Weaver's assessment that after the completion of the Town's website there was no clear direction as to what was to be done next.

Members discussed the concern that there are a number of residents who do not know what the Town is doing and how get that information to them. They discussed the difficulty in reaching and relating to the Community no matter what is published or posted.

Mr. Weaver discussed with members if there was more interested in reviewing direction strategy or in writing articles. Mrs. Dove expressed her interest in writing but felt that there were limited opportunities for their publication. They also discussed their sense that it is an opportunity for the Town to gather the community's communications in a spirit of cooperation to keep the resident from being overwhelmed with the barrage of information coming from so many sources. They discussed there is need for better communications, not more, and a need to reach more special interests.

Mr. Weaver listed some of his observations about the Town's communications and discussed each individual item;

- ↓ *We have a solid communication platform in place; Town website, social media, Town Notes, Biweekly e-blast and the Residents' Xchange.*
- ↓ *We are using the right media (written, web, social) and our communications look and sound professional*
- ↓ *We should be able to concentrate, for the most part, in improving not rebuilding*
- ↓ *We have some real challenges to work through;*
- ↓ *The town's communications are not always the first source of information about the town's business*
- ↓ *Competing for attention from other community entities all with their own messages and media*
- ↓ *Our audience is diverse with different information needs and preferences ... and a limited attention span*
- ↓ *Limited staff and expertise*
- ↓ *The committee's charter is broad enough to allow the committee to contribute fully ... but let's not let the charter become an obstacle to getting things done.*

Mr. Weaver highlighted and discussed some opportunities for the Committee to work on into the coming year;

- ↓ *Are the town's most important messages getting across ... different than simply providing information;*
- ↓ *Build support for important issues and decisions*
- ↓ *Build a positive image in the broader community*
- ↓ *Market itself to prospective homeowners and visitors*
- ↓ *Engage and understand our residents' needs and expectations*
- ↓ *Considering the limited opportunities we have to communicate, are we focusing on the most important stuff;*
- ↓ *Getting the big messages and information across*
- ↓ *Providing basic information and transactional support and making it easy to get to Residents need to understand how the town affects them, rules and regulations, when and how they may be impacted by changes Residents and businesses need to make town related transactions effectively*
- ↓ *Have we assessed and built on the changes that have been made to our communications tools over the past couple years to assure that they are hitting on the right messages, getting to the intended audiences, and getting through all the competing "noise";*
- ↓ *Can the committee, council and staff get better aligned and can we supplement the staff's limited resources.*

Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of what they consider to be the best way to communicate the Town's news and what the things that affect daily life.

Mr. Weaver made his recommendations to members on what he felt should be the Committee's priorities or focus items for 2015.

Immediate Priorities

- ↳ **MOST IMPORTANT** – Help to identify the town's most important messaging needs; then taking a role/lead in creating a strategy and work plan for each (i.e. town hall, beach renourishment or possible purchase of KIU);
- ↳ Get council Input and agreement
- ↳ Provide hands-on support to each communication project
- ↳ Fine-tune the "Town Notes" and biweekly-noticees;
- ↳ Reconsider the content of each and promote readership of bi-weekly notices;
- ↳ Create a specific content and message plan for each that supports to town's key objectives;
- ↳ Assist council and staff with communication firm search;
- ↳ Assist staff more fully in developing communication content for all media

Members engaged in an in-depth discussion of who should be taking the lead on identifying which topics are important to the Community, what forms of communications can be used and how the determination would be made on which topics would have the most importance. The suggestion was made to have a subcommittee meet to work through a process and make recommendations on communication strategies. Mrs. Dove and Mrs. Boyd volunteered to participate in the work sessions to determine the "Town Message".

Members discussed past communication opportunities that we missed due to Town Notes going to a quarterly publication schedule. Mrs. Dove made the suggestion that there be a direct mail letter from the Mayor to the residents to keep current information flowing.

Future Priorities

- Social media and Web

B. Review Status and Discuss Direction of Notes and Bi-Weekly Notices

Mr. Weaver indicated that in the short term, he felt that the committee should focus on the wisdom of moving *Town Notes* to a quarterly rather than a monthly publication. Since limited space, he suggested that some of the items should be reviewed are; is the right content being included in the limited space, if all efforts were made to make sure noted are targeted in the right way, and to make long term planning for content. He also left the discussion open to if members felt that *Town Notes* publications should be increase and to how many.

Mr. Weaver stated that with Town using the Bi-Weekly e-blast to take the place of the paper publication. He made the suggestion that some kind of assessment be made on how well the Town has done in its efforts to move individuals from the paper to the social media platform of communications. Mrs. Boyd and Mrs. Kasman offered to help Ms. Braswell in the project.

Members discussed efforts that could be made by the Town to encourage the Island publications to work together in the content of their publications.

C. Communication Consultant Search

Mr. Weaver posed the question to the Committee Members if they would support and assist in the search to identify a professional Communications P/R Firm. He indicated that the intent was to engage a firm to assist Council and the Town when projects develop that would benefit or require some professional expertise or with immediate short terms communications. The Committee would confirm the benefit to such services and then would identify and vet the available firms.

Members discussed and asked questions on criteria for firm selection to include if there could be the choice of using an individual/resident who may be a par-time Town employee. Having an individual whose primary focus would be to protect the image of Kiawah, would be an extreme advantage to the Town along the performing the P/R on special events and to get stories placed.

VIII. Chairman's Comments:

None

IX. Committee Member Comments:


None

X. Citizen Comments:

None

XI. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned 5:30 PM.

Submitted by


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

10-13-2015
Date