



**City of Lake Forest Park
City Council Communications Committee
Thursday, August 15, 2016
4:30 p.m.
Lake Forest Park City Hall
Lake Forest Room
17425 Ballinger Way NE
PROPOSED AGENDA**

Committee Members: **Phillippa Kassover, Chair; Mark Phillips, Tom French**

4:30 p.m. **Call to Order**
 Adoption of Agenda
 Adoption of Meeting Notes – July 7, 2016

Committee Discussion Topics

- 1. Review Current Draft of Communications Plan*
- 2. Report on Budget Process for Website Redesign Proposal*

6:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

DRAFT

**Council Communications Committee Notes
Lake Forest Room
July 7, 2016**

Councilmembers Present: Phillippa Kassover, Chair; Mark Phillips, Councilmember

Councilmembers Absent: Tom French

Staff Present: JoAnne Trudel, Deputy City Clerk

Visitors: 1

Chair Kassover called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Phillips moved, Kassover seconded, to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

Approval of Meeting Notes – May 23, 2016

Phillips moved, Kassover seconded, to approve the meeting notes of May 23, 2016 as presented. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

Review Social Media Policy: Resolution 1409, passed March 2014

Chair Kassover noted she attended the staff Communications Team meeting held earlier today.

Members briefly discussed various sections of the Social Media Policy.

Chair's Report from Meeting with Administration's Communications Team

Chair Kassover noted the staff Communications Team will discuss the current Social Media Policy, as it hasn't been updated since it was adopted. She noted there was consensus that the Policy should be reviewed every 2-3 years.

She noted there was a good discussion of the use of the newsflash module, including the types of information that is released via newsflash and the possibility that information could be saved up and released once a week, so those subscribing to the newsflash notifications are not inundated with emails throughout the week.

There was Communications Committee support for the compilation approach to newsflashes.

Chair Kassover reported on the statistics on the number of followers for the various social media outlets the City currently uses.

Discussion turned to the website, and a list of agencies using the current CivicPlus platform was distributed by Deputy City Clerk Trudel. Brief discussion included a neighboring city's "council corner" on its website, and whether other website vendors are being researched. Deputy City Clerk Trudel

responded that there is not enough time to research other vendors before the budget proposals are due.

Gain Input from Committee on Specific Council Communications Needs for Inclusion in Draft Communications Plan

Chair Kassover reported she believes the focus of the Committee's work on the draft Communications Plan needs to be shifted to the introduction, guiding principles, and target audiences.

Discussion included options for boosting the video content on the website and social media:

- Reach out to Shorecrest High School regarding help with creating videos
- Using videos created by other agencies
- Possibility of receiving video training from the cable franchisees and possibly checking out equipment from them

Discussion turned to communication of information including:

- Strategic Plan
- Safe Streets Study
- Budget process
- Parks Task Force findings
- Upcoming Council policy
- Public hearings, public meetings

Chair Kassover will spend more time working on the draft plan following these discussions and will run it by the other Committee members for review. She also noted she thinks social media should be left to the administration and staff.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The July, August, and September meeting schedule was discussed and decided upon, as follows:

- Regular meeting of July 25, 2016 – canceled
- Regular meeting of August 22, 2016 – rescheduled to August 15, 2016
- Regular meeting of September 19, 2016 - canceled

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

JoAnne Trudel
Deputy City Clerk

City Council of Lake Forest Park Draft Communications Plan

August 2016

Introduction

The City Council values citizen involvement and the expertise and good information possessed by the citizens of Lake Forest Park. The council acknowledges the importance of including citizen concerns, ideas and values to help the council and City make better decisions. To effectively engage citizens, the council needs to identify and budget adequate resources to enable citizens and citizen groups to become an effective part of the City's decision making process.

Much of the City's overall success is shaped by the quality of its communication efforts. This Communications Plan is intended to document and provide a framework for the principles, policies and budget decisions that guide and fund the City's communications efforts.

Guiding Principles

Open, Two-Way Communication – Ensure that information is shared throughout the community and the city council and administration, emphasizing two-way information flow.

Community Problem Solving – Provide citizens with complete, accurate and timely information enabling them to arrive at informed conclusions. This will help the City to make the best decisions.

Proactive – The Plan gives the City the opportunity to tell its story rather than rely exclusively on others to interpret the City's actions, issues and decisions.

Decentralized – Strengthen direct communication between elected officials, City departments, and citizens. Siloes within organizations can impede progress, hinder appropriate actions on key decisions, and create misunderstandings when responding to citizens' concerns. Enhancing direct communication opportunities provides for more knowledgeable discourse, strengthens accountability, and makes it easier to access or provide information on City activities.

Inclusive – Including everyone in the process builds teamwork and a feeling of belonging, breaking down feelings of "us vs. them," which can be a problem in city governments and in relationships of city government with citizens. The goal is to include everyone who cares to participate and to motivate to participate those who are not currently engaged.

Strong and Consistent Messages – A successful communications plan is built on strong themes. The communications plan should support, reinforce and reflect the goals of the

City government as established by the City Council, with the collaboration of the Mayor and the City administration. This underscores the idea of an organization with one common purpose: the health and well-being of our community and its citizens.

Target Audiences

Identifying and prioritizing target audiences are key components of a communications plan. An understanding of city priorities and issues by both the primary and secondary target audiences is crucial to the success of our city.

Primary Target Audiences

1. Citizens of Lake Forest Park

Citizens of Lake Forest Park are the highest priority target audience. Strengthening the relationship between City government and 13,000 residents is the starting point of a sound communications plan.

2. Members of City boards, commissions and committees

While these people are covered under the broad umbrella of item 1, above, Citizens of Lake Forest Park, the volunteer work they do on behalf of the community and government makes them a distinct and valued target audience.

3. City Employees

People employed by the City of Lake Forest Park are an integral part of the success of the communications with citizens. Each individual reflects the organization in his/her daily work.

4. Local News Media

While it is rare for regional broadcast or print media to cover news from our city, the media is important because its coverage of LFP City government can have significant influence on the image of government by the public. The most readily available media outlet is the hyper-local online *Shoreline Area News*, which does not have an active reporting staff, but will post news releases, photographs and stories submitted by the City.

Secondary Audiences

- Neighboring communities, including area residents who drive through, shop, work or visit in Lake Forest Park
- Other local governments in King and Snohomish Counties and beyond
- Elected state and federal officials
- City government associations and organizations

- Specialty online blogs and discussion forums, e.g. Seattle Transit Blog

Goals of the City Council Communications Plan

- Provide a framework for budget priorities and decisions for city communications
- Ensure the Mayor and City Council are an active and integral part of the overall city communications efforts.
- Identify procedures and policy for the City's effective and coordinated response to media inquiries and regular distribution of public information.
- Improve City communication to and from Lake Forest Park citizens, businesses and organizations.
- Improve two-way communication within the City organization.
- Enhance and improve community and media relations.
- Increase awareness, interest and participation of the citizens of Lake Forest Park in government goals and activities.
- Break down feelings of "us vs. them" between the City government and the residents of Lake Forest Park.
- Increase awareness, interest and participation of all City employees in the goals and activities of the City.
- Build organizational pride among employees and positive identification with the City government as a whole.

Strategies and Actions

Strategies

- Ensure that the most appropriate and effective technology tools are included in city budgets and regular updates are planned and funded to support a multimedia and multilevel communications approach.
- Utilize consultants, interns or other community resources to help finalize policies and procedures for city communications, and evaluate the effectiveness of city communications, as well as attitudes and opinions of the citizens of Lake Forest Park.
- Use interactive communications tools and techniques wherever and whenever possible to involve target audiences in the communications process and increase their commitment to the idea of community problem-solving.

Actions

- Communications Audit

Review our communications policies and procedures, tools and strategies to determine weaknesses and gaps. Consider using an outside firm, an appropriate graduate intern, or identifying local expertise to conduct a communications audit.

- Communications Training

Identify resources to provide communications counseling and training for City officials and staff. Include the Mayor, Council Members, City Administrator and Department Heads, as well as staff fulfilling communications roles in the course of their job duties, and members of ongoing City commissions, committees and boards. Training shall include procedures and policy for the City's effective and coordinated response to media inquiries and distribution of public information.

- Market Research

Identify resources to conduct attitudinal surveys and focus groups. The implementation must reach a broad spectrum of Lake Forest Park citizens so that the results accurately reflect the demographic profile of the community.

Current Communications Tools

External

City Newsletter

Description: Quarterly publication, four pages, direct mailed.

Objective: To provide general City information to the community.

Strengths: Reaches every household, easy to read, attractive format.

Weaknesses:

- a) Lacks timeliness and is reactive rather than proactive in scope.
- b) Lacks specific city council communication.

Audience: All Lake Forest Park households.

Website

Description: Comprehensive website designed to enable designated staff to post information from a desktop computer. The site contains news items, department listings, calendar of City meetings and events, agendas and minutes for all Commissions, Committees and Council. It offers a search function and access to City programs, services, documents and more. Viewers can request automatic email or text notification of news items, agendas, calendar postings etc., when posted.

Recordings of City Council meetings are available on the website as follows:

- Regular business meetings are video streamed live and available to replay “on demand”
- Work Session meetings are audio streamed live and available to replay “on demand”

Objective: To provide "one-stop" access to City information via the internet.

Strengths: Flexible and relatively easy to read. Easy to keep current and to add or delete information.

Weaknesses:

- a) Currently we are using an older version of the Civicplus website platform, which is unable to provide on-line services or searches on permits, licenses etc. This will improve if the City invests in upgrading the platform and completes the ongoing/planned upgrades of its accounting and permitting software.
- b) Is only available to citizens with Internet access.
- c) The website currently lacks a significant opportunity for city council communications.

Audience: Anyone with access to the Internet.

Social Media

Description: Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor are used by city staff to promote upcoming events, distribute newsworthy items, and inform the public about traffic and other public safety issues.

Objective: To provide a source of current information (primarily Facebook), promote city stories to local news media (primarily Twitter) and alert citizens regarding urgent public safety and traffic issues (Nextdoor).

Strengths: Easy posting and timely distribution. Well defined policies for public safety postings.

Weaknesses: As relatively new tools, these channels are still growing their audiences.

Website Survey Tool – not currently available on the city website, but will be implemented if the platform is upgraded.

Description: Simple surveys or questionnaires can be posted from the backend. Persons who have completed the survey can view results. Participation is limited to one entry per computer.

Objective: To provide citizens with a means of commenting and providing input on City issues from their desktop.

Strengths: Extremely flexible.

Weaknesses: Only available to citizens with Internet access.

Audience: Anyone with access to the Internet.

Video/TV

Description: The City has government access channel 21, LFPTV. The current content list and associated update schedule for LFPTV is shown below:

Format	Looped Content	Updated
PPT	Council monthly mtg. schedule	Monthly
PPT	Council agenda recaps	2x/month
Video	Most recent Council regular business meeting	2x/month
PPT	Combined Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Channel 21 – Contact Info• City Hall• City Governance• Mayor; Councilmembers• Speaking at Council meetings• City Council Committees• City Council Goals 2014	<i>Bimonthly, or more often as needed</i>
Video	Lyon Creek time lapse video	
Video	Meet the LFP Police Department	
Video	"We the people" jury duty service	
Video	Police Dept. – Safety Tips	
Video	Planning & Building – Tree Permit	

Objective: Use public access television to provide information about City issues to the community.

Strengths: Reliable and knowledgeable staff, who are always willing to help and to improve coverage.

Weaknesses: Program scheduling is confusing. Difficult to determine what time City programs will air. Television viewers tend to "surf" channels and land on the public access channels by chance.

Audience: Customers of Comcast and CenturyLink residing within the city limits.

Brochures and Assorted Printed Materials

Description: A variety of informational brochures and assorted printed materials are created in-house to help provide guidance to residents and other customers on

conducting business with the City. These are placed in display racks at City Hall. They are mailed in response to inquiries and used as a resource by front-line staff.

Objective: To provide brief, easy-to-understand information about City services and programs.

Strengths: Inexpensive, simple, easy to create.

Weaknesses: Limited distribution.

Audience: Lake Forest Park residents and other customers doing business with the City.

News Releases

Descriptions: News releases are prepared news or publicity items about City of Lake Forest Park business. Releases should be timely and relevant and contain the facts of the information. The release should include basic information: who, what, where, when, why and how. Wherever possible, a photograph should be included to draw the visual interest of the reader.

A news release is generally longer and more detailed than a newsflash. It is targeted for release by a media outlet.

Objectives: To provide the local media timely, accurate, and useful news about the City of Lake Forest Park. Releases are emailed to the local media.

Strengths: Easy to write and distribute.

Weakness: Not always "picked-up" and used by the media. Limited staff availability for preparation and distribution.

Audience: Local media.

Newsflashes

Description: A newsflash is a prepared news or publicity item about the City of Lake Forest Park, including public safety items. Newsflashes should be timely and relevant and contain the facts of the information: who, what, where, when, why and how. Wherever possible, a photograph should be included to draw the visual interest and attention of the reader.

A newsflash is briefer than a news release, and is targeted for immediate posting on the City's website.

Objective: To call attention to City programs, accomplishments, and upcoming public meetings.

Strengths: Easy to read, write and distribute.

Weaknesses: Not available to citizens without Internet access.

Audience: Anyone with Internet access.

Note: Staff is currently discussing the benefits of sending a weekly digest for those items that do not have urgency or immediacy and reserving the immediate Newsflash for event and meeting reminders as well as urgent traffic or public safety items.

Public Meetings

Description: In addition to the regularly scheduled Council and other committee and Commission meetings, public meetings targeted towards specific issues are also held as needed: town halls, ballot measures, subarea plans, major projects, etc.

Objective: To present the community with an opportunity to express opinions and give input on specific City issues.

Strengths: Attendees hear the opinions of others and have a greater appreciation for the issue as a whole beyond their own personal opinions.

Weaknesses: Often attracts the same limited group of citizens.

Audience: Either broad-base citizenry, or specific targeted group.

Internal

All Users E-mail

Description: Each City employee receives E-mail directed to "all users". E-mails include news releases, Council agendas, minutes, training opportunities etc.

Objective: Ensure that employees hear news from the organization before reading it in the papers or hearing it "on the street."

Strengths: Quick and timely information.

Weaknesses: Not all employees check their e-mail on a regular basis and not all employees have an individual computer (e.g. shared computers at the Public Works shop).

Audience: Employees

Leadership Team Meetings

Description: Directors of city departments gather each week to review up-coming Council meetings, action items and to keep each other informed of issues in their own departments. The meetings provide an opportunity for department heads to share critical information and determine appropriate action and support across department boundaries.

Objective: Ensure that all departments are familiar with broad issues related to City business and can offer practical information and support to other departments.

Strengths: Regular face-to-face contact between department heads.

Weaknesses: Information is not always communicated down the chain to department staff.

Audience: Department Heads.

Department Meetings

Descriptions: Each department meets regularly to exchange information and to update each other on issues and activities within the department and other departments.

Objective: Share information with all department employees about department business and citywide business.

Strengths: Provides an opportunity for employees to "catch up" and "check in" with each other and for staff to share with their Directors useful information regarding current topics in the city.

Weaknesses: Because of busy schedules and conflicting meetings, department meetings are not always held on a regular basis.

Audience: Employees.

Talking Points

Description: Reference sheet provided to employees and Mayor and Council related to specific and often complicated issues. Talking Points generally contain the basics: who, what, where, when, why and how of an issue. They enable employees to become familiar with an issue quickly and respond factually to citizen questions.

Strength: Easy to read, easy to reference.

Weakness: Not prepared or utilized widely at this time due to staff constraints

Audience: City Council, mayor, Department heads and front-line staff: both internal and field personnel.

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