

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2020

Members Attending:

Pam Yoss – President

Stephen Yellin – Secretary, Council Liaison

Gentiana Brahimaj, Council Liaison

Christina Cioffe

Dr. Donald DeFabio (arrived at 8:40 PM)

Lucinda Hayes

Herman Matfes

Athena Sapir

Pam Yoss (PY) called meeting to order at 7:38 PM

- PY welcomed Gentiana Brahimaj (GB) and Athena Sapir (AS) as new members. All committee members then introduced themselves.

Election of Officers.

- Stephen Yellin (SY) nominated PY for President of the committee. Herman Matfes (HM) seconded the nomination. There being no other nominees, PY was elected by acclamation. PY thanked the committee for its support.
- PY nominated SY for Secretary of the committee. Lucinda Hayes (LH) seconded the nomination. There being no other nominees, SY was elected by acclamation. SY thanked the committee for its support.

Status Updates (Old Business)

- Township Crest – PY noted that the Township has the opportunity (if it wishes) to design a new crest. The current one was designed in the 1960s. LH is creating some options that are in line with the Township branding
 - PY suggested that open, public meetings be held at Town Hall to obtain input and collaboration from residents, as was done with the Township website in 2018.
 - LH discussed fonts, style and content themes for the crest. A discussion followed.
 - Following discussion, it was agreed that the public should be invited to attend a meeting that provides specific options for the public's consideration, as was done with the Township website meeting. LH, AS, GB and SY volunteered to assist with this presentation if it should go ahead.
 - PY will discuss scheduling the meeting with Liza Viana.
- Township Newsletter
 - PY noted that the newsletter was successfully moved to the new system (MailChimp) following the township website transition. PY praised Sander Raajmakers for his assistance in setting up a great template for the emails.
- Realtor Letter
 - Christina Cioffe (CC) will send committee members a revised version of the letter in the near future.
- “Get to Know Your Elected Officials” series
 - A series of profiles on the Township's elected officials will be published in a Q & A format. They will be published first on

TAP into Berkeley Heights before being shared from the Township website to all social media outlets.

- Caroline Yodice will be coordinating this project. The interviews will ideally take place in different locations (such as the Senior Citizens Club meetings) to increase public awareness and engagement.
- A discussion ensued regarding the series, its format, ownership of the stories, and where and how it would be published.
- 2020 Township Budget request
 - PY discussed the details of the committee's funding requests in the 2020 Township Municipal Budget. This includes a mailing to residents that incorporates important facts and contact information for residents to know.
 - A discussion ensued on whether MailChimp was the best available vendor for our newsletters and other digital communications. It was concluded that the committee will continue using MailChimp as it was deemed the best available choice.
 - A discussion ensued on whether the mailing to residents should occur as a letter or a postcard. It was decided that a 6" x 8" postcard would be the most cost-effective way to proceed. SY volunteered to obtain cost estimates for budget purposes.
- Paper Calendar for Senior Citizens
 - PY and LH are working on a monthly print calendar that will be made available to senior citizens. This will include basic

township information as well as a calendar. This paper calendar will also be available online.

- Instagram Photo Contest
 - The committee agreed to support a town-wide contest for the best photos of Berkeley Heights. Submissions would be included on the Township's Instagram page to help drive traffic to the site.
- Coffee and Conversations
 - It was agreed that the first Coffee and Conversations event will happen in February; the second, in April; and the third, in November.

New Business

- A discussion ensued on various ways the Township could increase the total of residents signing up for the Township newsletter. It was agreed that AS would take the lead in this area with the assistance of PY. AS will work with the Township Library to encourage signups of library patrons.
- SY discussed the possibility of a Township "app" to provide a basic set of information and contacts for residents. A free app has been designed by Councilman Fred Wied of Somerville, a friend of SY, and Councilman Wied has offered to meet with the committee to discuss the process further. After discussion, it was agreed that SY would approach Councilman Wied to set up a meeting with a smaller group of committee members.
- A brief discussion ensued on scheduling group and individual photos of the Mayor and Council members for use on the

Township website (as well as elsewhere). [NOTE: the photoshoot took place on February 4th]

- PY noted that the committee will be working to coordinate meetings between other Township committees. This will help volunteers understand what the other committees are working on and ideally improve communication between these groups.
- A discussion ensued as to the possibility of committee members appearing in the Happening in the Heights video series. The matter was deferred to subsequent committee meetings for further discussion.
- In order to improve communication with residents about Township Council meetings and their outcome, it was agreed that the Mayor & Council should provide a clean summary of what is on the agenda for each meeting before it takes place. That is because much of the agenda involves legal jargon or other complexities that residents may be unfamiliar with. SY and GB agreed to discuss this with their colleagues.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 PM.

- *Minutes compiled by Stephen Yellin, Secretary*