Town of Brimfield, Ad Hoc Committee for Website Improvement

First Meeting

Monday December 11th 2017, 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Town hall annex conference room

In attendance: Frank Della Rosa, Elizabeth Sutton, Pam Engberg, Lynn Field, Camille Collins, Bob Datz, Bob Sullivan.

1. The 4 of 5 members (Frank, Pam, Lynn, Camille) were sworn in by town clerk Bob Sullivan. Elizabeth requested time to consider and will inform us if she wishes to be a member at next meeting. Pam made a motion to appoint Lynn Field as chairperson of the committee. This was seconded by Frank and all were in favor. Camille volunteered to take notes for the meeting. Bob explained that members must take the electronic ethics exam for Massachusetts, which is the same one than municipal employees take (<https://www.mass.gov/online-conflict-of-interest-training>).
2. Bob provided a brief overview of the Open Meeting Laws, provided a paper copy to each member. Bob explained the importance of avoiding informal or unannounced meetings, for example casual/accidental meetings between 3 or more members of the committee where issues relevant to the committee are discussed. This would include emails where three or more members discuss committee business beyond planning of regular meetings. On a group email it would be acceptable to share resources for the committee to review but, not to deliberate.

While there are only 5 voting members of the committee, the meeting is open to the public, and we can invite specific individuals to get their input as needed.

Bob Datz explained to the committee about the cable public access which is for Public, Education, and Government (PEG) and suggested he may come with video camera to transmit a committee meeting.

1. Long Term Goals:
2. **Improve the calendar function of the website of the Town of Brimfield**, to facilitate meeting planning, and the sharing of agendas and notes so that Brimfield can better meet the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. This will be done using the existing application called My Town Government <http://www.mytowngovernment.org/> (On this site, select "Anytown, USA" for a short tutorial on how to log in, schedule meetings, etc.)
3. **Build capacity, draft guidelines, plan orientation for the use of MyTownGov,** including how to: set up accounts and passwords, manage the calendar, schedule/cancel a meeting, post complete agendas and notes. This will include informing the public about this new resource.
4. **Propose changes to the town bylaw** that would make online posting the primary form of meeting announcement

Note: We agreed that it is NOT our goal to make broader changes to the Town Webpage, although we understand that there are additional concerns about its functionality, maintenance and high cost. It is important to note that any investment of time and money in My Town Government will not be lost should the town later decide to switch to a different web platform. My Town Government calendar is an independent platform, not dependent on our webpage (although it can be accessed through the page) and can be easily transferred to a new webpage if needed.

1. Next Steps:

* Familiarize ourselves with My Town Gov and its functionalities, and any existing resources to help with orientation/training/maintenance. Frank will share his notes from his visit to Chatham MA, where MTG is used.
* Enquire if Josh Smith, the developer, from Barre MA, would be willing to visit Brimfield to present to us.
* Notes from this meeting should be shared within 10 days. Camille to start a google doc for tracking and sharing our notes. We will also look for an appropriate place to store paper copies, or at least make them available if anyone wants to see them

1. Next Meeting: Will aim to have a meeting during the last week of the year, but will wait to know J. Smith’s availability before setting date.