

Delaware Municipal Web Developers Group

MEETING SUMMARY

October 18, 2007

Kent County Levy Court Building

Dover, Delaware

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Attendees/Absentees

Attendees:

Susan Ambridge (IPA-University of Delaware), **Barbara Belli** (Wilmington), **Jennifer Brook** (Smyrna), **Mark Deshon** (IPA-University of Delaware), **Greg Hughes** (GIC), **Kristen Krenzer** (Middletown), **Patricia Laurion** (Sussex County), **Richard Maly** (Camden), **Paul Morrill** (Delaware City), **Tracy Mulligan** (Bethany Beach), **Donald Mulrine** (Camden), **David Potter** (Middletown), **Donna Schwartz** (Fenwick Island), **Danny Schweers** (The Ardens), **Eddie Sparpaglione** (Sussex County), **Dell Tush** (Dewey Beach), and **Nelson Wiles** (Lewes); plus guests **Dick Cleaveland** (Dewey Beach), **Fran Fletcher** (IPA-University of Delaware), and **Chris Portante** (GIS).

Absentees:

Win Abbott (Clayton), **Cathy Beaver** (Townsend), **Lisa Boltz** (Camden), **Tricia Booth** (Seaford), **Mark Callan** (Dover), **Kathleen Clifton** (Delaware City), **Marian Delaney** (New Castle), **John Giles** (Elsmere), **Rebecca Greene** (Felton), **Ev Hall** (Greenwood), **Lisa Kail** (Bethany Beach), **Mark Kennedy** (Kent County), **Jason Kilpatrick** (Milford), **Tina Law** (Elsmere), **Mike Mahaffie** (OSPC), **Jim McElhinney** (New Castle County), **Jessica Norton** (Odessa), **Marta Pacheco** (Newark), **Tom Roth** (Henlopen Acres), **Rita Shade Simpson** (Newport), **Jamie Smith** (Laurel), **Pam Smith** (South Bethany), **Marie Thomas** (Ocean View), **Angela Townsend** (Georgetown), and **Richard Wright** (Millville).

2. Website Status Reports

- **The Ardens** – Talking about obtaining a .gov domain.
- **Bethany Beach** – Contracted with CivicPlus in August and is in the process of developing a new site, which is scheduled to go live on Jan. 1, 2008. So far the town has had good citizen participation in the project. The town will be able to maintain the site in-house and has received support from IPA and GIC.

- **Camden** – Is in the middle of redesign (have contracted with Delaware.net) and will be going to a .gov domain. Want to place an emphasis on an intranet for better interdepartmental communication. Plan to launch in mid-November.
- **Delaware City** – Launched a new site earlier (www.delawarecity.delaware.gov) in the year with help from IPA. Right now it contains simple information and is maintained in-house.
- **Dewey Beach** – Recognizes a need for enhancements and updates. Last year the town moved to Delaware.net and now need to sit down with them to work on small changes. Agendas and public notices are taking up most of the time, and the town now wants to post a newsletter on the site.
- **Fenwick Island** – Is currently looking at redesign. Wants to see something different and fresh and is looking into a possible move to a .gov domain.
- **Lewes** – Redesigned site one year ago and now trying to keep it current. So far the city has received a lot of positive feedback. By Jan. 1, 2008, it hopes to offer online payments. It has recently added a police department page.
- **Middletown** – The new police department wants their own website, so they are beginning that process now (www.middletownpd.us). The town also wants to change to a portal configuration (much like the state site).
- **Smyrna** – Just added council recordings to the site. Now getting ready to go live with Web Q/A (interactive package) on Nov. 1, 2007.
- **Wilmington** – Will be undergoing major changes to the site, which will reflect recent political reconfiguration with respect to the city's communications (now under the Mayor's Office). The city is now contracting with an advertising agency (Aloysius, Butler & Clark) to do marketing and content management with support from each department. The city also decided that separate departments may not have their own separate website. Will be going to .gov domain and will also be linked to from an "InWilmington" portal.
- **Sussex County** – 65-70% complete in its redesign, emphasizing standards-based compliance (W3C). Has worked with UD Delaware Observation Station for emergency management information. Is receiving more and more requests for Google map "mash-ups." Currently the county is forming a study group to test the site. It is working on PR and has added a public information officer position.
- **Government Information Center** – Working on three things right now:
 1. Adobe fillable/savable forms – serviced Camden recently
 2. Mobile content – allow people to access information on cell phones, etc.
 3. Google maps – purchased key and ad-free google maps.
 4. On Oct. 30, 2007, the Delaware Technology Conference will be held in Dover.

3. Report on NAGW Annual Conference – Barbara Belli (Wilmington)

- NAGW started in Kansas City, Mo., and is now a national 501c6 organization.
- Convened in Valley Forge, Pa., this year with 255 attendees.
- Keynote speaker was Lynn Grillo from Adobe Systems.

- Workshops included
 - Pre-conference panel on best practices – focused on management of website and how to speak with constituents.
 - Emergency management – communication with personnel and getting information up – possible pre-conference workshop next year.
 - Ways to connect with constituents (Delphi Consulting) via the Web.
- Benefits of joining
 - \$75 per year; membership provides deep discount for annual conference registration
 - Access to listserv to ask questions
 - Access to resource center/library on the website to get information from sponsors and past conferences
- 2008 NAGW Annual Conference will be held at a resort in St. Charles, Ill., just outside of Chicago, during the second week of September. Members will receive discounts on rooms and conference registration.
- www.nagw.org

4. Group Planning Discussion – Fran Fletcher (IPA-University of Delaware)

A group discussion was facilitated by Fran Fletcher based on the survey completed by a majority of MWDG members. The purpose was to brainstorm ideas and possible direction for the group. Further discussion will need to occur in the future to clearly identify goals and interests of the group. An organizational component will be necessary as well.

The [survey results](#) were handed out to participants.

The following summarizes the group discussion after surveys results were handed out:

Mission:

- Should the mission be modified?
 - Is it doing what you want it to do (i.e., is it still good) for you?
- How do you define education and support?
 - Support
 - Discussions
 - Networking with other local government representatives
 - Variety of knowledge to share
 - Forum for networking and discussion
- Education
 - Educate whom and for what?
 - Those in the group
 - Local officials
 - Does the group have the responsibility to educate officials in the towns?

- Industry-wide best practices
- What is e-government?
 - Need common definition
 - Inherent in Web development in this group – should we drop “e-government” and replace with the words “web development”?

Future Needs and Suggestions:

- Needs
 - Defining e-government
 - Breakdown of categories
 - Legal issues
 - Independent websites by department
- Group could allow representative to go back to town and make suggestions
- Suggestions
 - Presentation to give to council on group opinion on a certain issue—would be a statewide suggestion, not from just one person
 - Group could present ideas to Delaware League of Local Governments.
 - For whom does our group exist?
 - How can we get elected officials to take a greater interest?
 - Part of the education mission could be to get those who aren’t or haven’t been interested to participate.
 - Give awareness and trends – subgroup can go meet with town officials so the individual working for them won’t be put on the spot.
 - Define the function of the group.
 - Provide guidelines for what should be online.
 - Develop tangibles in terms of Web development (e.g., general notebook so the town can track their progress from beginning of development – towns can chart their progress on a continuum, from initial thoughts prior to town having a website through wholesale redevelopment of an existing site.
 - Advance e-government for the entire state (e.g., pool money and have a vendor build an application specific for Delaware towns instead of just one town, so that everyone in the state can use it).
 - Institute annual dues.

Members present then identified areas that were the most important to them.

- Should the mission be modified? Clarify “e-government.” 1 vote
- Networking 7 votes
- Education
 - Provide one session per meeting for [concrete education item]. 9 votes
 - Illuminate best practices. 2 votes

- Expand knowledge. 1 vote
- Support (There were no specific “support” statements made. See note below.)

Note: There is a rather natural overlap of networking, education, and support, so rather than specify what future needs and suggestions pertain to which part of the group mission, these are presented here logically grouped from most to least chosen, without regard for what part(s) of the tri-fold mission would be covered by each.

- Needs:
 - Provide practical information. 12 votes
 - Provide guidance and/or written guidelines. 10 votes
 - Address common difficulties (linking, domain names, etc.). 9 votes
 - Introduce current technology trends. 8 votes
 - Deal with obtaining administrative/political will (educate others). 6 votes
 - Clarify [issues] for ourselves and others. 4 votes
 - Develop policy guidelines. 3 votes
 - Share good and challenging issues. 3 votes
 - Discuss legal issues. 2 votes
 - Clarify mission. 2 votes
 - Address website maintenance. 1 vote
- Suggestions:
 - Create PowerPoint presentation to educate municipal councils. 12 votes
 - Present at DLLG meetings [and/or annual DILGL]. 12 votes
 - Provide specific workshops with take-away deliverables (tangibles, notebook of to-do guidelines). 11 votes
 - Opt to pool funds to [help] build common [municipal] sites. 11 votes
 - Make group formally known to officials with focus on consensus support and cooperation; publicize how it can contribute. 10 votes
 - Build and issue members a resource binder (of info). 7 votes
 - Increase networking and Web resources. 6 votes
 - Reference other guidelines for direction of [group’s] guidelines. 4 votes
 - Include more [group] leadership presentations (fewer vendors). 3 votes
 - Work to effect change and policy on state’s municipal websites. 1 vote

Participation:

- Oversight – What is involved?
 - Food (there was general consensus lunch is a good thing to include)
 - Agendas
 - Meeting Coordination
 - Group Communications

- Website
- Direction
 - Future Needs and Suggestions
 - DLLG Liaison
 - Policy Development
- Planning
- Research
- Advocacy

Should we invite groups that don't fit the definition of membership? There was the opinion that vendors should not be invited, or if one business was then they all should be invited.

Leadership:

Members then identified areas in which they would be interested in helping:

MEETING PLANNING

David Potter (Middletown), Kristen Krenzer (Middletown), Eddie Sparpaglione (Sussex Co.)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Nelson Wiles (Lewes)

COMMUNICATION, WEBSITE, AND MEETING FACILITATION

Mark Deshon (IPA)

LIAISON WITH OTHER GROUPS

NAGW – Barbara Belli (Wilmington)

DLLG – Eddie Sparpaglione (Sussex Co.)

SCAT – Dell Tush (Dewey Beach) and Eddie Sparpaglione (Sussex Co.)

Meeting Facility – Mark Kennedy (Kent Co.)

PRESENTERS TO DLLG

Dell Tush (Dewey Beach), Greg Hughes (GIC)

SPEAKERS

Greg Hughes (GIC)

Addendum:

The MWDG summer survey also indicated that the following persons (who were either absent or did not volunteer during the meeting) might be interested in helping in the following areas.

<i>Win Abbott (Clayton)</i>	<i>POLICY DEVELOPMENT</i>
<i>Trisha Booth (Seaford)</i>	<i>unspecified</i>
<i>Marian Delaney (New Castle)</i>	<i>unspecified</i>
<i>Richard Maly (Camden)</i>	<i>LIAISON WITH DLLG</i>
<i>Tracy Mulligan (Bethany Beach)</i>	<i>POLICY DEVELOPMENT</i>

At the conclusion of the meeting, Fran laid out the steps to continue this process.

- Organize information and give ideas back to group
- How you put the ideas into action is the next step
- Challenge is meeting only quarterly
- Need clarification on the mission
- Need to lay out who is going to be responsible for what
- May need to have more frequent meetings

It was suggested by Eddie Sparpaglione that a steering committee could be put together to meet more frequently and answer some of the questions brought up from this meeting.

Announcement of Next Meeting

Next meeting will take place on Thursday, January 24, at 12:30 p.m. at the Kent County Building and will begin with lunch, courtesy of the Town of Middletown.