Delaware Municipal Web Developers Group
MEETING SUMMARY

October 19, 2006
University of Delaware Paradee Center
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Attendees/Absentees

Attendees:

Susan Ambridge (IPA – University of Delaware), **Barbara Belli** (Wilmington), **Linda Collins** (Millville), **Marian Delaney** (New Castle), **Mark Deshon** (IPA – University of Delaware), **Kristen Krenzer** (Middletown), **Mike Mahaffie** (Office of State Planning Coordination), **David Potter** (Middletown), **Tom Roth** (Henlopen Acres), **Charles Ruggiero** (Sussex Co.), **Donna Schwartz** (Fenwick Island), **Pam Smith** (South Bethany), **Eddie Sparpaglione** (Sussex Co.), **Marie Thomas** (Ocean View), **Dell Tush** (Dewey Beach), **Amy Walls** (Seaford), **Nelson Wiles** (Lewes).

Absentees:

Win Abbott (Clayton), **Cathy Beaver** (Townsend), **Jennifer Brook** (Smyrna), **Mark Callan** (Dover), **Kathy Clifton** (Delaware City), **Cindy Fisher** (Delmar), **John Giles** (Elsmere), **Rebecca Greene** (Felton), **Ev Hall** (Greenwood), **Greg Hughes** (GIC), **Lisa Kail** (Bethany Beach), **Tina Law** (Elsmere), **Paul Morrill** (Delaware City), **Jessica Norton** (Odessa), **Rita Shade** (Newport), **Jamie Smith** (Laurel), **Maureen Stewart** (Townsend), **Angela Townsend** (Georgetown), **Randy Westergren** (Milford)

2. Member Website Status

- **Dewey Beach** – changed service provider to Delaware.net; redesign of site to a municipal, rather than social, page
- **Henlopen Acres** – an "information page" is live; not much support (other than financial) from council
- **Lewes** – testing "beta" site for redevelopment contracted through Delaware.net; every department has designated person responsible for their specific section within the site
- **Middletown** – wants to bring in PDFs, etc. (site responsibility taken on by new PR director Kristen Krenzer, a new MWDG member); working on revamping design

- **Millville**—no website at this time; taking ideas from other municipalities to get one started
- **New Castle** – website needs revision and has money budgeted to do so; now has voter registration and tourist information; new administrator is looking to change the physical appearance of site
- **Ocean View** – needs webpage revision but staff changes may slow progress
- **Seaford** – website is functional but outdated; will be asking for money to revamp; issues with getting up-to-date information from various committees and departments to post on site
- **South Bethany** – no major concerns with website; now able to login and upload changes locally to website
- **Sussex Co.** – all public meetings since April are available in digital video on the website; redesign to mimic what the state's has done with its website; new MWDG member Charles Ruggiero was introduced
- **Wilmington** – planning redesign of website; working on putting streaming media online; wants to conduct a usability test of site
- **Office of State Planning Coordination** – starting on redesign of content; new powerful server added, so need to clean up the site
- **MWDG** – members asked to help add additional resources; please look over site and e-mail webmaster with feedback

NOTE TO OTHER MUNICIPAL WEBMASTERS: Please help us add to this status list by sending Mark Deshon a brief status note (like the ones above). Thanks.

3. Member Presentations: National Association of Government Webmasters Annual Conference, held September 27–29, 2006, in Reno, Nevada

NAGW Conference and Organization Overview (Barbara Belli, Wilmington)

- The National Association of Government Webmasters was started in Kansas City, Mo., and has since spread throughout the U.S. and into Canada.
- Policy-Writing Workshop
  - o Speaker Carol Spencer (Morris County, N.J.)
  - o Discussed the importance of a privacy policy and terms of conditions on website
  - o Policy resources handouts available in Resources page of MWDG site
  - o Remember, anyone with a legal contention can use information from a municipal website against the municipality unless there is an established policy that specifically protects the municipality.
  - o Don't have a lawyer write your privacy policy for you. Get a legal team on board to aid in writing.
- www.NAGW.org

- Annual conference is held the third week of September from Wednesday to Friday
- 2007 meeting will be held in Valley Forge, Pa.
- Group is made up of mostly municipal webmasters with limited background (website maintenance/design/etc. is not most people's primary responsibility).
- At this point, an informal discussion on web privacy policies ensued, making it clear that it should be a topic that MWDG should deal with in a future meeting.
  - Mike Mahaffie suggested that maybe the group should create a Delaware municipality privacy policy.
  - Lewes has a disclaimer about external links on its site.
  - Wilmington has a neighborhood link, which few neighborhoods are buying into. Barbara Belli recently received a link from a neighborhood which was to a MySpace page. She has reservations about posting and wants to look into developing a policy that does not allow third-party social-website links.
  - Mike pointed out that social websites can be beneficial. Dover has an elected official (Tim Slavin) who uses a blog as a communication medium.
  - What about potential problems using RSS—really simple sindication (a lightweight XML format for distributing news headlines and other content on the Web)?
  - Municipalities need minimal policies for what goes on their websites. Webmasters should meet with council, mayor, and managers, at the starting point so they can provide their input.
  - Use caution when posting council minutes. They should be the approved minutes, not drafts.

Summary Notes from NAGW Conference Sessions (Mark Deshon, IPA)

- Mark Deshon gave a brief PowerPoint presentation (downloadable PDF on MWDG website) on some of the many issues addressed at the NAGW Conference.
- Users are increasing, as "millennials" (those born between 1985 and 2000) will continue to create increased and represent a higher percentage of traffic on the Internet. The main idea for municipal websites is that "customer service is key" for ensuring return visits.
- Municipalities should use monitoring software to see what pages on their site are being viewed. Dewey Beach uses AdFreeStats, which offers a wide array of services.
- All municipalities need to make sure their sites are Section 508–compliant. They must be accessible, not only to those with physical disabilities, but also to those with attention disorders.
- Freeware vs. Shareware

o   Freeware is software that can be used at no charge.
o   Shareware may be used for free for a limited time and then should be purchased

4. Discussion of Issues to Address in Future Meetings

A few key issues emerged from the day's discussions that MWDG members wanted to see addressed during future meetings (in no particular order).

- Web Policies and Procedures
- Website Redesign
- Electronic Payments
- E-mail Databases
- Accessibility (Section 508)

The group may try to have outside speakers come to speak on one of the specific topics in a future meeting. Others will be addressed among the MWDG constituents.

5. Setting Future Meeting Schedule

The group consensus was that the MDWG should meet quarterly, on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. to more efficiently tackle some of the weightier issues facing its constituency. It was also suggested that the duration be expanded by a half hour (to 3:30 p.m.) to accommodate more lengthy discussions and potentially some working subgroup time.

The MWDG will now meet in **January**, **April**, **July**, and **October**, the specific Thursdays to be announced.