

4/08/09 Charter Commission Workshop

Peter Feeney Conference Room, 6pm

Members Present: Claude Morgan (co-chair), Lisa Villa (co-chair), David Lunt, Steve Gorden.

Others Present: Elizabeth Trice (staff), Angela Berube (IT staff), John Joy (IT Staff)

Updates from Morgan:

County manager would like to be presented with budget late May or early June.

Current expenses are deducted from referendum/public relations account.

Claude and Peter also had conversation about fundraising. Would a PAC be allowable? Is group interested in searching for funds?

Regarding cost of doing meaningful outreach for referendum.

Plan A: charter commission members do the footwork, print up palm cards.

Plan B: palm cards, yard signage

Plan C: the above plus advertisements in local print media, radio

Requested budget will be at least \$17,000.

County manager doesn't believe commission is entitled to large budget.

Claude will check on any limitations commission has to doing fundraising.

Information Technology

Discussion of making emails accessible for Freedom of information act

Intention is to blind copy all emails to a charter commission "dead box" ie

charter@chartercommission.org. Trice & Berube will have access to deadbox.

Importance of letting public know that all correspondence is public.

Claude will send sample disclaimer language to be placed on bottom of emails.

Website:

Registered two domains: cumberlandcountychartercommission.com and .org. Both domains will point to the same place. The .org will be the primary domain, and will be used for email address.

Angela is looking into creating a feedback form that would send public input to one or all members.

Standard feedback form doesn't accept input from web-based emails (yahoo, gmail)

Other alternative is to host website separately from county website, and use form that is attached to database file. GoDaddy hosting offers this form technology and also forums very inexpensively – less than \$20/month.

Each feedback field can specify how many characters are allowed in each field.

Lunt requests that note be posted saying that "Responses will not be answered individually but will be discussed in public meetings"

Charter commission members can have emails that forward to their desired email address.

Angela will ensure that all emails that go to charter commission emails will also go to deadbox.

Trice suggests that gmail address be used for deadbox to allow for easier searching for FOIA requests.

No fields should be required.

Ask if the person is interested in receiving meeting announcements, minutes, announcements.

Gorden request group get a simple preferably free project management software including GANT.

Morgan will get name of software to Gorden, Trice

2010 Budget

Gorden's shortest timeline from 2008 was distributed, shows completion in 2009

Budget items

Legal

Outreach (includes cost for radio, TV, signage, printing)

Meetings

- Trice will ask Somerset county about their budget
- Morgan will ask other counties about how ballot items and other budget items were funded.
- Trice will check with Vic to see if mileage is being reimbursed out of Charter account.

Outreach ideas:

Create mock meeting with all issues compressed, video, make available online.

Group likes this idea. Individual "hot topics" could be videoed as chapters to be placed online via YouTube and charter website. Can produce one or more chapters at a time and get feedback through website.

- Gorden will talk with Eder to move this idea forward.

Options to create short videos in the near future:

Edit the last three meetings into short video segments.

Create a quarterly "mock" meeting showing results of last three meetings. Could use as part of high school program discussed, and also used to elicit comments on particular topics.

Other possible chapter titles: background, administrative, mission statement, questions for the public.

- Trice will check for county's capacity to do editing.
- Morgan will look for possible intern to do editing work.

Drafting

Good start has been created from scratch in 1982. Group can start working with that.

- Trice will get 1982 charter scanned with text recognition and deliver document to commission as word document.

Group reasserts the importance of the charter passing, the importance of listening to all objections, and doing the process comprehensively and correctly.

One benefit of charter is to allow county to offer more services on a contract basis to towns.

CCRCC is a good example of this. Discuss of possible savings and benefits through shared code enforcement, health officer, welfare, assessing.

Public would want to know: what is in document, how can it be changed, who can change it? What kind of control will I learn? Will it increase efficiency and/or accountability? Proposing a way for authority for certain activities to be transferred to county, and ways for authority to be transferred back.

Towns don't have negotiating power with cable companies, county would have more power.

Adjourned at 7:55