

Deerfield Public Library
Board Communications Committee Minutes
June 2, 2010

1) Call to order and Attendance:

Mary Courtney-Committee Chair brought the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. Attending: Board members: Mary Courtney, Ken Abosch, Marla Bark Dembitz, and Jeff Rivlin. Staff: Mary Pergander-Library Director, Karen Kleckner-Head of Readers' Services and Public Relations, Carol Dolin-Business Manager.

Guests: Rick Lynn-CIG Co-chair, Mark Fox-CIG Co-chair, Polly Koenigsknecht-Library Consultant.

2) Change of campaign consulting leadership

The Board previously made the decision to engage a firm that specializes in referendum campaigns to manage the communications function of the public engagement process, a role previously fulfilled in part by Ehlers and Associates. Ehlers and Associates will continue to provide financial guidance. Ms. Pergander and Ms. Kleckner have been interviewing and evaluating potential firms for the engagement. Ms. Koenigsknecht was invited as a participating guest to outline roles and expectations of the Campaign Manager, Board, Staff, and CIG. Mr. Abosch asked if Ms. Koenigsknecht had performed this work before. She outlined the process she has used regularly since 1997 when she began leading campaigns. She spoke positively of the Library's efforts toward engaging the public and putting the CIG in place, which provides a strong foundation from which to build. She believes it is possible to develop a successful campaign should the Board decide to hold a referendum in fall, 2010. She delineated the differences in roles that the Library has, compared to the activities in which community members may engage during such a campaign. The Library Board makes decisions, explains why the decision is best, disseminates information, and explains why decisions are made. The citizen group can encourage specific action on the part of voters such as recommending a Yes vote, raise funds to be used in a campaign, and help share information about the Library.

3) Forming the Board Communications Committee:

The following decisions were made regarding the Communications Committee:

- The Communications Committee is ad hoc, comprised of the four attending Board members, and will disband after the Referendum Campaign.
- It will serve as a steering committee to liaise with Library administration, CIG members, Campaign Manager, and the full Board to facilitate dissemination of comprehensive, cohesive, and unified messaging at optimal times to generate the greatest support throughout the Campaign. Mr. Simon will continue as the CIG liaison.
- Roles of the Committee, Board, Administration, Staff, and CIG will evolve in three phases – immediate, secondary, and formal referendum drive (if any) - especially with regard to the CIG, which can work closely with the Library during the first two phases, but must diverge during the possible referendum drive.
 - Committee: Similar to other committees, it is responsible for pre-work to define, delineate, and focus the message; shape script; and make recommendations regarding communications to the full Board to reduce time needed to make decisions and get information out.
 - Board: Communicate the decision regarding the chosen Option, communicate the message to the Village leadership and community at large.

- Ms. Pergander: Primary information disburser. In order to keep the process moving forward, Ms. Pergander has the authority to make timely decisions about committee-related activities, and to utilize the CIG to help share information with the community.
 - Campaign Manager: Provide guidance to manage timing, unify the message, prepare various communications media, and keep the process on track
 - Staff: Work closely with the Campaign Manager and Ms. Pergander to craft language and prepare communications for release.
 - CIG:
 - a) Disseminate the message to as many people as possible at the Open Houses and other opportunities. Use a limited number of existing members, if possible.
 - b) Synthesize the feedback from the Open Houses. Use existing members, if possible.
 - c) After the Open Houses, possibly evolve into an independent advocacy group to mobilize support for the Referendum. Recruit as many new members as possible toward this future effort.
- 4) Short-term concerns – June Open Houses, June 26 and June 29
- The next round of Open Houses will inform the public about the Board decision regarding the preferred Option, and solicit additional feedback from the public. It is important to get as many people to these open houses as possible.
 - The Committee decided to use Ms. Kleckner’s postcard as a special mailing.
 - Ms. Koenigsknecht recommended that the Board and CIG personally invite a specific number of people via telephone, e-mail, or letter after the postcards go out.
 - The format for this round of open houses will follow that of the previous open houses including a script for the Board, use of large information posters, provision of feedback forms, and optional tours.
 - The object is to increase attendance, deliver a focused, exciting message, and convey how the building project will change the future of services offered at the Library.
 - Questions about construction costs versus project costs need to be delineated and explained clearly and simply.
 - The public is interested in the Village Board’s role in this process. Mr. Abosch said the Village Trustees have indicated that they will help, but do not wish to control the process.
 - The CIG tallying committee will be asked to synthesize and report to the Board on the feedback from attendees.
 - The feedback form questions will be redesigned to support the summarizing process.
 - CIG members will be invited to a pre-Open House update to advise them of recent activities, share information useful to the open house process, and to discuss questions that may be raised and how to address them, etc. This will be about one week prior to the first open house.
- 5) Other promotional and information efforts
- Building tours are now being offered on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Tours are being publicized via posters, press releases, and pre-tour announcements over the Library intercom.
 - The Building Improvement Project informational posters are mounted on the first floor in the Lobby and near Reference.
 - A “Planning for the Future” page is on the Library website

- Reporter Matt Kiefer is pursuing regular updates from the Board and staff for the Deerfield Review.
 - Youth Services will be at the Farmer's Market on June 19. CIG may walk around with clipboards to collect e-mail addresses from people interested in getting involved with the Library project. Postcards with contact information will also be available.
 - The Library Board is scheduled to meet with the Village Board Committee of the Whole on June 21. The time is yet to be determined.
 - Social Networking uses – Policies regarding staff and public use are in the final stages of development and will go to the Board for approval in the next month.
- 6) Formation of other citizen-based committees
- The Committee decided that further committee formation has the potential to be cumbersome and slow the communications process. No further committees are needed at this time.
- 7) Other topics of discussion
- In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Board Committee meetings must be posted no less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting time. The next Communications Committee meeting must be schedule before the June Regular Board meeting.
 - CIG and Board members should submit their questions for the Village to Mr. Abosch or Ms. Pergander so clear, consistent answers can be developed. The questions in the CIG report to the Board and list of FAQs from the Library website can be used as a basis.
 - The Board requested an information session with Ms. Koenigsknecht to learn more about what is and is not permitted in its role during the possible referendum campaign.
- 8) Adjournment
- The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.