

Memorandum

To: University Park Town Council
Mayor Lenford Carey

From: Council Committee on Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure

Members: Heidi A. Sorensen (Chair), Councilmember Bradlee Hess, Councilmember Joe Thompson, Councilmember Linda Verrill

Date: September 30, 2014; *Supplemented with Additional Email correspondence from Mayor Carey at request of Mayor Carey 10/2/2014*

Re: University Park Town Newsletter

The Council Committee on Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure was asked to review and report back on a draft Scope of Work for the Editor of the Town Newsletter (Appendix A). In public meetings held by the Committee in August and September 2014 and in developing these recommendations, the Committee determined that many of requirements set forth in the Scope of Work it received should be part of the request for proposals, the written agreement with the Newsletter Editor who is selected, and/or should be the basis for a legislative resolution or ordinance. The preference of the Committee is that these recommendations be incorporated as appropriate into these documents to ensure that the Committee's recommendations are adopted on a permanent basis and not just as part of the scope of work for a single procurement for the Town Newsletter Editor.

The Committee recommends that the Council hold an Executive Session with Town Counsel to obtain legal advice related to the draft Scope of Work, these recommendations, and the guidelines related to sole source procurements as they relate to selecting both the Newsletter Editor and the printer for the Newsletter. The Committee also recommends that the draft Scope of Work and these recommendations be discussed with the full Council at a public meeting before being considered for adoption.

September 30, 2014

This report includes both a clean and a redline copy of the Committee's recommendations for a revised Scope of Work (Appendix B), the agendas and minutes for the meetings held by the Committee (Appendix C), public comments received via email by Committee members (Appendix D), and a draft resolution for Council consideration (Appendix E).

APPENDIX A



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure

Mayor <mayor@upmd.org>

Fri, Jul 25, 2014 at 2:42 PM

To: Ward 5 <ward5@upmd.org>

Cc: Ward 1 <ward1@upmd.org>, Ward 3 <ward3@upmd.org>, Ward 4 <ward4@upmd.org>, Tracey Toscano <ttoscano@upmd.org>

Heidi—

On July 21, the Council appointed you as Chair of the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure. Joe Thompson (Ward 1), Bradlee Hess (Ward 3), and the Ward 4 Council Member (when elected) will also be Members of the Committee.

The Committee also has had its first matter referred to it in this Council, as the Council also took the following action re: the Draft Scope of Work for Editor of the University Park Newsletter (attached):

A. SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE EDITOR OF THE UNIVERSITY PARK NEWSLETTER

Mayor Carey explained that he will go out for bids for the Editor and request proposals and the contract will come back to Council for approval. The Mayor requested Council suggestions and additions re: the Draft Scope of Work.

Motion: For the Council Committee on Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure to solicit public comments and address the scope of work, as drafted, for an Editor of the University Park Newsletter by September 30 and to recommend them to the Mayor.

Moved by: Mr. Gekas**Seconded by:** Mr. Hess**Yea:** 5**Nay:** 0**Abstain:** 0

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor

Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue

University Park, Maryland

Office: (301) 927-4262



SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR.docx

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SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The Town of University Park, Maryland, seeks proposals from interested and qualified firms or individuals to act as an editor for the University Park Newsletter ("Newsletter"). The scope of services outlined below is to be used as a general guide and is not intended to be a complete list of tasks necessary to complete the newsletter editor role. The editor will be hired as an independent contractor.

The Newsletter has been one of the main forms of communication from the Town government to its residents for many years, and includes official Town notices, calendars, minutes of the Town Council meetings, notices of pending legislation, columns and information from elected officials, and reports from Town Police and Public Works. The Newsletter also publishes items of interest to Town residents, such as announcements of events and obituaries. No paid advertising or advertising for a commercial, for-profit, religious or political purpose is allowed. All content in the Newsletter not received directly from the Town must be attributed. No periodic article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town. A copy of a recent Newsletter is attached to this Request for Proposals ("RFP") for reference.

The Newsletter is published eleven times per year at the beginning of each month except for August, when a combined July/August issue is published at the beginning of July. This RFP does not involve a request for redesign. The Newsletter in current format is an 8 and ½ by 11 inch size with approximately 12-20 pages each month, with an average of 16 pages. The number of pages at publication should be a multiple of four (8, 12, 16, 20) except in unusual circumstances. The Newsletter shall be assembled using Adobe InDesign software or equivalent and shall be provided to the Town's designated printer in a print ready PDF.

The editor is responsible for timely solicitation and assembly of content for inclusion in the Newsletter. The position involves copy editing, but not content editing or editing of the substance of copy. The editor will be expected to follow the Associated Press Stylebook, and is encouraged to review edits with those submitting content. The editor shall report directly to the Town's Mayor and will interact directly with the Town's designated printer. A proof copy of the Newsletter must be submitted to the Mayor for review two working days prior to submission to the printer. The print ready PDF must be submitted to the printer and to the Clerk at Town Hall five days prior to publication date. Time is of the essence in assembling the newsletter and providing it to the Town's printer to allow for publication by the first business day of any month. Bids should provide a proposed schedule of work demonstrating by what date content must be submitted to the editor in order to maintain the publication date. Preference will be given to bids that demonstrate a quick turnaround between content submission and submission to the printer.

APPENDIX B

SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

(as revised by the Council Committee on Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure, September 30, 2014)

The Town of University Park, Maryland, (“the Town”) seeks proposals from parties to act as an editor for the University Park Newsletter (“Newsletter”). For purposes of this Scope of Work, the term “Town” shall have the same meaning as in Section 101 of the Town Charter. The scope of services outlined below is to be used as a general guide and is not intended to be a complete list of tasks necessary to complete the newsletter editor role. The editor will be engaged as an independent contractor. The editor is required to be a Town resident unless there is no qualified Town resident who applies. In order to qualify as a Town resident for purposes of this preference, the candidate for editor should have lived in Town for at least one year. The Town may determine that a new editor should be engaged if the then current editor moves away from the Town.

In accordance with the Town personnel manual and the Town Code, the editor cannot be an employee of the Town or a Town elected official.

The Newsletter has been one of the main forms of communication from the Town government to its residents for many years, and includes official Town notices, calendars, minutes of the Town Council meetings, notices of pending legislation, columns and information from elected officials, and reports from Town Police and Public Works. In the Newsletter the Town also publishes items of interest to Town residents, such as announcements of events and obituaries. No paid advertising or advertising for a commercial, for-profit, religious or political purpose is allowed. All content in the Newsletter, including content received from Town employees or elected officials must be attributed. No regular or recurring article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town. A copy of a recent Newsletter is attached to the Request for Proposals (“RFP”), of which this Scope of Work is part, for reference.

The Newsletter is published eleven times per year at the beginning of each month except for August, when a combined July/August issue is published at the beginning of July. The RFP does not involve a request for redesign. The Newsletter in current format is an 8 and ½ by 11 inch size with approximately 12-20 pages each month, with an average of 16 pages. The number of pages

at publication should be a multiple of four (8, 12, 16, 20) except in unusual circumstances. The editor shall assemble the Newsletter and shall provide it to the Town's designated printer as a print-ready PDF.

The editor is responsible for timely solicitation and assembly of content for inclusion in the Newsletter. In collaboration with content authors/sources, the editor compiles, clarifies, edits for length, and performs copy editing so as to convey the substance intended by content authors/sources. The editor will be expected to follow the Associated Press Stylebook, and is encouraged to review edits with those submitting content. The editor shall report directly to the Town's Mayor and will interact directly with the Town's designated printer. The editor will meet periodically with the Mayor, the Town Council, and the Newsletter Review Board, as described below. The editor will also be involved in making recommendations related to the Town's selection of the designated printer.

The Town shall have a Newsletter Review Board ("Board"), which shall consist of the Mayor, a member of the Town Council selected by the Town Council, and a Town Resident, selected by the Mayor with approval of the Town Council. The Town Resident cannot be an employee of the Town or a Town elected official. The scope of the Board's review is limited to the Town's published newsletter editorial guidelines ("Editorial Guidelines"). If two or more board members agree that newsletter content is not in accordance with the Editorial Guidelines, the editor shall change such content in accordance with the instructions of the two or more board members who agree on the matter. Such instructions must be provided in writing to the editor within two working days ("the two working days") prior to submission to the printer.

If such instructions are provided to the editor after the two working days or if the Board members indicate that the proof copy is not in accordance with the Editorial Guidelines but two members of the Board cannot agree on instructions to address their expressed concerns, the editor may send the Newsletter to the printer "as is" or modify the Newsletter to address as best the editor can, the concerns expressed by the Board members.

[Note: The Committee members did not agree upon whether Newsletter Review Board should review the Newsletter every month or only upon request of the Mayor or the Editor. The Committee Members supported the following alternatives as set forth below:

(Alternative 1a - Supported by Committee Members Hess and Sorensen) A proof copy of the Newsletter must be made available via email to the Town's Newsletter Review Board ("the Board") for review during the two working days.

(Alternative 1b - Supported by Committee Members Thompson and Verrill) A proof copy of the Newsletter must be made available via email to the Mayor for review during the two working days. Upon request of either the Mayor or the Editor, the Newsletter must also be made available via email to the Town's Newsletter Review Board ("the Board") for review during the two working days.]

The print-ready PDF must be submitted to the printer and to the Clerk at Town Hall five days prior to publication date. Time is of the essence in assembling the newsletter and providing it to the Town's printer to allow for publication by the first business day of any month. Bids should provide a proposed schedule of work demonstrating by what date content must be submitted to the editor in order to maintain the publication date. Preference will be given to bids that demonstrate a quick turnaround between content submission and submission to the printer. Candidates for editor will be evaluated based upon their experience and qualifications in editing and publishing.

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Document comparison by Workshare Compare on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 2:04:04 PM

Input:	
Document 1 ID	file://\foleylaw.com\userdata\home\05250\UserProfile\My Documents\NDEcho\Original SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR.docx
Description	Original SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Document 2 ID	file://\foleylaw.com\userdata\home\05250\UserProfile\My Documents\NDEcho\Revised Scope of Work for Newsletter Editor.docx
Description	Revised Scope of Work for Newsletter Editor
Rendering set	Standard

Legend:	
<u>Insertion</u>	
Deletion	
Moved from	
<u>Moved to</u>	
Style change	
Format change	
Moved deletion	
Inserted cell	
Deleted cell	
Moved cell	
Split/Merged cell	
Padding cell	

Statistics:	
	Count
Insertions	31
Deletions	15
Moved from	0
Moved to	0
Style change	0
Format changed	0
Total changes	46

APPENDIX C

Agenda

University Park Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure Committee

Thursday, August 7, 2014

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

University Park Town Hall

The Committee will review a referral from the Council to solicit public comments and address a draft scope of work for an Editor of the University Park Newsletter with the goal of developing recommendations for the scope of work to be provided to the Mayor and the Council.

Meeting is open to the public.

Interested residents who are unable to attend are encouraged to contact:

Committee Chair, Councilmember Heidi Sorensen (ward5@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Joe Thompson (ward1@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Bradlee Hess (ward3@upmd.org)

To obtain additional information or to submit written comments for the Committee's consideration.

Town of University Park

Report of Meeting Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee

Thursday, August 7, 2014

7:00 pm

University Park Town Hall
6724 Baltimore Avenue

Committee Members Present:

Heidi Sorensen, Chair, Ward 5

Joe Thompson, Ward 1

Bradlee Hess, Ward 3

Others Present Included:

Mayor Len Carey

Roy Alvarez, Council Member, Ward 7

Jim Gekas, Council Member, Ward 2

Debra Suarez, Woodberry Street

Harold Freeman, Woodberry Street

Tasey Hannah, Pineway

Laura Donnelly, Underwood Street

Raphael Lorente, Woodberry Street

Dave Brosch, Tuckerman Street

Linda Verrill, Van Buren Street

Todd Stewart, Van Buren Street

Bridget Warren, Van Buren Street

Michelle Leonardi, Queens Chapel Road

Meeting called to order: 7:05 pm

Ms. Sorensen - Introduction

Ms. Sorensen welcomed all and explained that the meeting will focus on the draft scope of work (attached) for the Editor of the University Park Newsletter. This is a topic that the Town Council and Committee began discussing last year. One topic that has been discussed is whether a written agreement will be necessary for the Editor and the process for developing that agreement.

Mayor Carey

Mayor Carey stated that there is no written contract for the Editor of the newsletter. The current rate is \$1,000.00 an issue (\$11,000.00 per year) and since this is above the

\$10,000.00 threshold which the Town requires, the contract must go to bid. Mayor Carey pointed out that the Council can override this procedure.

Ms. Sorensen - Suggested topics for discussion

- All content in the Newsletter not received directly from the Town must be attributed.
- No periodic article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the town.
- Will the Town purchase the Adobe InDesign software for the Editor.
- The position involves copy editing, but not content editing or editing of the substance of copy.
- The editor shall report directly to the Town's Mayor and will interact directly with the Town's designated printer.
- Preference will be given to bids that demonstrate a quick turnaround between content submission and submission to the printer.
- Any preference or requirement that the individual be a Town resident or have close ties to the Town in some other way.
- Whether the newsletter editor should be independent, meaning not be an employee of the Town, not be an elected official of the Town and not serve on a Town committee.
- Does the editor need experience in editing and publishing and whether that will be one of the qualifications the candidates for editor will be evaluated on.

Questions and Comments

- Q.** Are there any restrictions on what can be done with the Newsletter in the by-laws or constitution? What is already put in place?
- A.** Mr. Gekas noted that Section 402(b)(1iii) of the Town Charter states that the Council has the power to pass ordinances for the specific purpose of publishing and distributing a Town newsletter to provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town, to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance, provided, however, that publication of such notices in the Town newsletter shall not be considered a substitute for any requirement for advertisement, in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town or the posting of notice in a public place.
- A.** Mr. Thompson pointed out that Section 401 (a) of the Town Charter defines the mayor as the chief executive officer and the head of the administrative branch of the Town government. Section 402 (b) defines the power of the Council to pass ordinances related to the newsletter.
- Q.** Why does the Mayor get a free ride in the Mayor's Column? Could be an editorial, his views expressed, may not be the views of the Council as a whole.

The issue can be not how the newsletter is put together but how it functions and who can put items into it. It could be a great political weapon for Mayors.

- C. There is a problem considering the newsletter as independent. It is a Town newsletter, paid for by taxes and a way for the Town to make the residents aware of what's happening.
- C. You either have to allow all the Council members put in a column every month unedited or not.
- A. There is nothing in the Town Charter that would prevent any Council member from putting a column in the newsletter; it just hasn't been done to date.
- C. Just stay with the current design which is an informational only newsletter.
- C. The newsletter is charming, unique, and expresses the character of the Town. The thought of bidding this out to someone outside of the Town is unthinkable. It has to be a Town resident. It should be someone who has experience in editing.
- C. Concerned about putting it out to bid for the lowest bidder. It needs to be a Town person who can read the history of the Town.
- Q. How do you envision the RFP process actually happening?
- A. Mayor Carey stated that the RFP will be built around the scope of work. The Mayor will ask the Council for suggestions in terms of the scope of work. There is a huge advantage if the editor is very familiar with the Town. The Mayor said that he plans to work with a group of people to evaluate the responses to the RFP and would bring his preferred option and at least three other competitive options to the Council for discussion and approval..
- C. It is a charming thing to live in a town that sends this newsletter, it makes it feel you live in a small town, so the editor should be someone in Town. It really can't be independent. Would like the Mayor and Council members to tell him what they think because if he does not like what they think, he is going to vote against them. The Mayor's column or a Council member's column should not be edited for content.
- C. What kind of newsletter do we want? If we want to have opinions, maybe the newsletter is not the place, maybe a blog posting that everybody can put up.
- C. It could be a mess if everyone had an opinion in the newsletter. It would be nice if there was another way for elected officials to put out their opinion beside the newsletter.

- C. This is a newsletter, factual information, the Mayor writes his column and discusses what is happening in Town, it should not be an opinion, it should just be what is happening. Maybe opinion is not appropriate.
- C. Sometimes the Mayor's column is expressing an opinion and is it actually persuasive in some way.
- C. Opinion should not be used argumentatively.
- Q. Is it required in the by-laws that a contractor reports to the Mayor? This can set the Mayor up for a real problem, a potential conflict of interest, plus it has the appearance of too much oversight and control and not a good position to put the Mayor in. Would like the editor to report to an editorial board, including the Mayor, Town Council, and some residents.
- C. Keeping opinion out is the best thing.
- C. Does not think the newsletter is independent since it is paid for by Town taxes. The Mayor or any Council member should be able to express an opinion in the newsletter.
- C. Consider a page dedicated to columns but the rest of the newsletter should be informational.
- C. There is opinion in the newsletter, which can be found in the minutes.
- C. Has no problem with opinion, but stating what you believe other persons' opinions or motivation is problematic.
- C. It's a mistake to use opinions to do other than inform in the Town newsletter. It should be used to provide contact for information to people and to go beyond that, to argue a view point is not for the newsletter, a different forum should be used for that.
- Q. How do we voice our opinions and how do we talk about it?
- C. An editor ought to be able to hold the writers to the editorial guidelines and if the writer ignores this then it should be a Council matter.
- C. Is there a mechanism for the Mayor or any Council member, if the editor finds a problem, that there is another source, like an editorial board that could resolve the issue?

- C. Where is the most appropriate place for opinion and it might not be our charming little newsletter? Maybe in the newsletter but one page that says "this is opinion only".
- C. In terms of the RFP, the criteria needs to be much more specific.
- C. The editor should not be a Town employee and they should be a Town resident.
- C. Should not be an elected official. Not sure that a Town employee couldn't do the job, since opinion may not be included, there is no reason to eliminate a Town employee.
- C. The list serve is an excellent resource for the Town.
- Q. Are there moonlighting policies that would prevent Town employees from taking additional employment?
- A. The personnel manual has moonlighting policies.

Conclusion

Mr. Hess pointed out that at the last Council meeting, a decision would be made on the topic of the newsletter by September 30, 2014. Mr. Thompson said that any written comments on this subject can be e-mailed to the Committee members.

Meeting adjourned: 8:25 p.m.

Agenda

University Park Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure Committee

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

University Park Town Hall

The Committee will continue its review of a referral from the Council to solicit public comments and address a draft scope of work for an Editor of the University Park Newsletter. This meeting will be focused on developing specific recommendations for the scope of work, the selection process for the newsletter editor, and any other needed documents.

Meeting is open to the public.

Interested residents who are unable to attend are encouraged to contact:

Committee Chair, Councilmember Heidi Sorensen (ward5@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Joe Thompson (ward1@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Bradlee Hess (ward3@upmd.org)

To obtain additional information or to submit written comments for the Committee's consideration.

Town of University Park

Report of Meeting Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

7:00 pm

University Park Town Hall

6724 Baltimore Avenue

Committee Members Present:

Heidi Sorensen, Chair, Ward 5

Joe Thompson, Ward 1

Bradlee Hess, Ward 3

Linda Verrill, Ward 4

Others Present Included:

Mayor Len Carey

Jim Gekas, Council Member, Ward 2

Susan Dorn, 40th Avenue

Harold Freeman, Woodberry Street

Michelle Leonardi, Queens Chapel Road

Todd Stewart, Van Buren Street

Victor Stone, Woodberry Street

Meeting called to order: 7:05 pm

Ms. Sorensen - Introduction

Ms. Sorensen explained that the meeting will focus on the language for the scope of work, RFP, and other related documents for the Editor of the University Park Newsletter.

Opening Public Comments

- Most people feel that the newsletter is doing what it is suppose to be doing. He cannot understand why spend time and money on something that is functioning perfectly well. There are many other things in town that need to be addressed such as cracks in sidewalks, streets that need sidewalks. He does not believe that the Charter allows the Council members or the Mayor to give their opinions in the Newsletter.
- She understands the importance of the scope of work since it will be an official written document for the future but said that it should reflect what the Newsletter currently is since there is nothing wrong with it.
- The scope of work should reflect that the Editor be a town resident.

Discussion of recommendations for the language of the Scope of Work, RFP, and Related Documents

1. *The Town of University Park, Maryland, seeks proposals from interested and qualified firms or individuals to act as an editor for the University Park Newsletter ("Newsletter").*

- Should be a requirement that the Editor be a town resident.
- There is no guarantee that someone in town would want to be the Editor, it would be best to have a preference.
- What information should be included in the scope of work, vs. another part of an RFP, contract or another type of document?

(The Committee determined that it would recommend a requirement that the Editor is required to be a Town resident unless there is no qualified Town resident who applies.)

2. *Preference will be given to bids that demonstrate a quick turnaround between content submission and submission to the printer.*

- Timelier news would help the news value.
- Frustrated to read news and events in the newsletter that happened weeks before.
- Supplement the newsletter to get the latest information out in a timely basis.

(The Committee determined that it would recommend that this sentence should remain as is and be incorporated into the criteria for evaluating proposals.)

3. *Qualifications*

- Editor should be qualified to perform the editorial responsibilities, which should go beyond proofreading.
- Have the candidates demonstrate that they can meet the requirements of the position when evaluating their qualifications.

(The Committee determined that it would recommend that candidates for Editor will be evaluated based upon their experience and qualifications in editing and publishing)

4. *Can a Town employee could compete for the Editor position?*

(The Personnel Manual says that no town employee shall be an independent contractor and the ordinance that accompanied also made that clear for town elected officials. The Committee determined that it would recommend referencing these requirements in the RFP and/or related documents.)

5. All content in the Newsletter not received directly from the Town must be attributed.

- Smart to have an attribution when the article is not from the town.
- Does not want the attribution rule to be burdensome to an Editor. If there could be some logic addressed.
- If a Council member or the Mayor writes an article, make sure that the colleagues agree.
- There are a lot of town residents who, if they thought they could write an article, would want to write an article. How many do you accept and which do you exclude?
- Informational submission from a town organization should not require approval for each and every one of them.

(The Committee determined that it would recommend attribution for articles, columns or other submissions, other than things submitted by the Town. The Committee will complete discussions of what types of submissions do not need to be attributed at its next meeting and who constitutes the "Town" for this purpose at its next meeting.)

6. No periodic article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town.

- There should be approval for a periodic article or columns.
- There should be a general approval for a regular column.
- Does not like the idea of turning the newsletter into a periodic magazine.
- The Editor should prioritize the articles.

(The Committee will complete its discussion of how periodic articles or columns are approved at its next meeting.)

7. Recommendation for an Editorial Review Board

- Have the Council take action if there's perceived to be abuse of what goes into the Newsletter.
- Having an Editorial Review Board will not help in the timeliness of getting the Newsletter out quickly.
- Should there be a mechanism available to invoke in case someone is using the Newsletter in an advocacy role?
- The Editorial Review Board could be used to make a recommendation only in an extraordinary circumstance. They could have a role in developing the editorial guidelines which was suggested.
- The Editor, on a routine basis, email to the Editorial Review Board the draft article and the Board can make the decision on the article.

- The Editorial Review Board should be used as a mechanism if the first mechanism fails, which is the Editor and the submitter of the material.
- It would be appropriate for the Council to see how well the Editorial Guidelines are working and have a discussion with the Editors to see if they need to be tweaked.

(The Committee will continue discussions of an Editorial Review Board and Editorial Guidelines at its next meeting.)

Ms. Sorensen closed the meeting and stated that another meeting will be scheduled to continue working on the recommendations for the Scope of Work, RFP and other documents.

Meeting adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

Agenda

University Park Policy, Rules & Municipal Structure Committee

Monday, September 15, 2014
Wednesday, September 17, 2014 (if needed)

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

University Park Town Hall

The Committee will continue its review of a referral from the Council to solicit public comments and address a draft scope of work for an Editor of the University Park Newsletter. This meeting will be focused on developing specific recommendations for the scope of work, the selection process for the newsletter editor, and other documents, including a proposed ordinance, as needed.

Meeting is open to the public.

Interested residents who are unable to attend are encouraged to contact

Committee Chair, Councilmember Heidi Sorensen (ward5@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Joe Thompson (ward1@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Bradlee Hess (ward3@upmd.org)

Committee Member, Councilmember Linda Verrill (ward4@upmd.org)

to obtain additional information or to submit written comments for the Committee's consideration.

Town of University Park

Report of Meeting

Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee

Monday, September 15, 2014

7:00 pm

University Park Town Hall

6724 Baltimore Avenue

Committee Members Present:

Heidi Sorensen, Chair, Ward 5

Joe Thompson, Ward 1

Bradlee Hess, Ward 3

Linda Verrill, Ward 4

Others Present Included:

Mayor Len Carey

Roy Alvarez, Council Member, Ward 7

Bridget Warren, Van Buren Street

Todd Stewart, Van Buren Street

Tasey Hanna, Pineway

Meeting called to order: 7:00 pm

Ms. Sorensen - Introduction

Ms. Sorensen suggested that the meeting pick up where it was left off at the last meeting of August 27.

The Committee determined that it would recommend the following for the language of the Scope of Work, RFP and Related Documents at the August 27, 2014 meeting.

- *The editor is required to be a town resident unless there is no qualified town resident who applies.*
- *Preference will be given to bids that demonstrate a quick turnaround between content submission and submission to the printer and be incorporated into the criteria for evaluating proposals.*
- *Candidates for Editor will be evaluated based upon their experience and qualifications in editing and publishing.*

- *The Personnel Manual says that no town employee shall be an independent contractor and the ordinance that accompanied also made that clear for town elected officials. Reference these requirements in the RFP and/or related documents.*

Continued discussion of recommendations for the language of the Scope of Work, RFP and Related Documents

5. All content in the Newsletter not received directly from the Town must be attributed.

The Committee determined that it would recommend attribution for articles, columns or other submissions including those submitted by Town employees or elected officials.

6. No periodic article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town.

- In order for an Editorial Review Board be effective, it ought to review every issue. This will take the pressure off of the Editor.
- Something that is being edited by a number of people, it will take a lot of time.
- Not opposed to the Editorial Review Board, it should be more of a dispute resolution mechanism, but not for everything.
- The Editor and the Mayor should review the article or column and only go to the Editorial Review Board in rare occurrences.
- The Editorial Review Board should consist of three members: The Mayor, a resident and a member of the Council.
- An Editorial Review Board is not necessary. The Editor can follow the Editorial Guidelines and should be able to question anything against these guidelines. An issue with the author, including the Mayor, should be taken to Council or the Editorial Review Board prior to publishing.
- Need to see the Editorial Guidelines.

The Committee recommend that time be set at a Council meeting for discussion on the issues that the Committees recommendations raised, accurately representing the range of opinions on this issue will facilitate full Council discussion with public input.

7. Recommendation for an Editorial Review Board

The Committee determined that it would recommend if there would be an Editorial Review Board, that it be a three person Board.

8. The position involves copy editing, but not content editing or editing of the substance of copy.

The Committee determined that it would recommend that the position involves copy editing and may include editing for clarity or the length of submissions or to compile submissions and editing of content in collaboration with the author.

9. A proof copy of the Newsletter must be submitted to the Mayor for review two working days prior to submission to the printer.

- This is in the Mayor's original proposed scope of work.
- If the Mayor is on the proposed Editorial Review Board as proposed, submission to the Board will fulfill this requirement.

The Committee discussed how the recommendations for the scope of work, RFP or other appropriate documents should be presented to the Council.

- Create a document.
- Ask the town attorney to recommend what belongs in the different documents.
- The Committee and Council to provide recommendations that could be parsed into the scope of work or into the RFP altogether.
- First work on the RFP and consider an ordinance at a later time.
- The recommendations should be permanent.
- The Editorial Guidelines should be done by Resolution.
- The Editorial Guidelines could be proposed by the Editor to the Mayor and recommended to the Council for approval as a Resolution.
- Suggest including the contract for the editor into Section 618 of the Town Charter. The ordinance could be amended to reflect this.

Other issues related to the recommendations that can be parsed into a resolution, ordinance, RFP, Statement of Work:

The Newsletter shall be assembled using Adobe InDesign software or equivalent and shall be provided to the Town's designated printer in a print ready PDF.

- Print ready PDF.

The Committee discussed whether the printer should be part of the Editors RFP or that there be a separate RFP.

- The process should be the same for the Editor and the printer.
- The Editor should have a role in selecting the printer and in drafting the RFP.

Meeting adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

Town of University Park

Report of Meeting

Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

7:00 pm

University Park Town Hall

6724 Baltimore Avenue

Committee Members Present:

Heidi Sorensen, Chair, Ward 5

Joe Thompson, Ward 1

Bradlee Hess, Ward 3

Linda Verrill, Ward 4

Others Present Included:

Mayor Len Carey

Bridget Warren, Van Buren Street

Todd Stewart, Van Buren Street

Bruce Burroughs, East West Highway

Meeting called to order: 7:00 pm

Ms. Sorensen - Introduction

Ms. Sorensen stated that the Committee will continue the discussion of the draft document to provide additional recommendations to the Council and the Mayor with respect to the scope of work and RFP and related documents for procurement of a Newsletter Editor. Ms. Sorensen recommended that the final draft report take a memo format explaining what has been done, meetings held and to include copies of the Committee minutes and written e-mails with comments from town residents. This should be presented to the full Council for their consideration.

Discussion

The Committee went through the draft report to make any edits that were recommended and voted on issues where necessary.

Comments, questions or suggestions throughout the meeting

- What is the State law about requiring a contractor to live within the municipality?
- What happens if the Editor moves from University Park?
- Mayor Carey proposed that clear editorial guidelines coming through the Mayor and with the Council approving them, be put in the hands of the Editors. He would hope that a Review Board would not be necessary.

- Since the Review Board and the Editor are both selected by the Mayor and approved by the Council, why can't the Review Board make final decisions yet the Editor can?
- Mayor Carey stated that a standard contract does not terminate except for cause or convenience of the town. He also suggested that the Editors have periodic discussions with the Council to review how the process is going.
- Mayor Carey suggested picking up language that is currently in the Charter in regard to the purposes of the Newsletter, such as: it is not the place to argue out policy differences and there should not be political endorsements.

Conclusion of Meeting

Ms. Sorensen suggested that the edited report and attachments be presented to the Council on Monday, September 22, 2014 and ask that time be set at a future date with Town Council and for public discussion due to the amount of information included.

Meeting adjourned: 8:50 p.m.

APPENDIX D



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Flo Harris Comments on Newsletter

James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

Fri, Sep 5, 2014 at 1:11 PM

To: heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com, bradleeheess@gmail.com, Linda_Verrill@yahoo.com, mbcron@hotmail.com, ralvare1@umd.edu, ward 1 <ward1@upmd.org>, Ward 2 <ward2@upmd.org>, jcg20782@yahoo.com

Council Members,

Flo Harris was an important individual in the publishing of the Newsletter. Her comments are attached in case you have not received a hard copy or electronically thru our Town server.

Jim



UP Newsletter editor comments.docx

23K

Hi Len – After our talk (in response to your phone call), I read a paper describing what the “new” Town Editor’s duties should be and (because you said you agreed with everything I said), it has caused me to re-think the things I mentioned about my 29+ years as the UP Town Editor. Not that I would change anything that I said, just rather that I think I need to be more specific, because I do not agree with some of the points in that proposed job description.

First, who wrote the description? It doesn’t sound like the current Editors (or any Editor, really) would have written it. If the Council wrote it (as it IS their responsibility), then you and I probably are on the same track, and there definitely needs to be some changes made in it. If the Council requested that you write it, as Mayor, then I don’t see how you could say you agreed with everything I said. So rethinking the job of editor, here are my questions/thoughts:

1 – **Why is the Council (or Mayor? or both?) seeking a new editor when they already have a “dynamic duo” doing a great (and professional) job?** I see only two main differences in the newsletter now from when I was editor, (1) Most of the notices for quality area activities have been eliminated as have the columns about Town residents (“Congratulations” and the “Community Wish List”) and (2) the articles seem to be published as they were written when received (rather than rewritten in “the voice of the newsletter”). When I was editor, I took the time to rewrite the newsletter that way because I thought it made the newsletter read more cohesively. NOTE: Though I always left the articles from the mayor, police chief, and public works director as they were written (in the first person), I did edit them grammatically (and occasionally for content), always returning them to the writer for final approval or for the writer to change again before they were published.

2 – Because the only “personal opinion, per se” allowed in the newsletter is found **in the monthly articles from the Mayor, the Chief, and the UPPWD Director**, it seems reasonable to **include a byline under each article’s title**, maybe something to this effect: (The content of this article is solely the opinion of the Mayor/Chief/Director. All references to “the Town” or “the Council” indicate that the UP Town Council has voted and taken action on the specified issue.)

Then, as a matter of accountability and courtesy, **I think the Mayor, Chief, and Director should email their monthly columns to all the Council Members** (and maybe the Rules Committee Chair?) **at the same time they email it to the editor**. That way, comments may be made, and should be sent as a “Reply to all.” Comments must be received within a specified time. The final wording should be decided by the Mayor/Chief/Director and the editor.

Often the worry about articles that allow opinion is because an unintentional political viewpoint or an unrealized false statement might be made. I think something on the order of the aforementioned accountability system can remedy this and help our Town newsletter retain the high standards of a quality newsletter that it has proven to exhibit for decades.

Also, **the accountability issue is especially important since our newsletter is a monthly publication**. Honesty must be immediate and errors found before publication (often easier said than done); but the damage is done when a response or revision can’t appear until a month later. The editor also needs this accountability (as I know from experience). Ideally, **the editor should have two proofers** for each edition, one of which should be the mayor. I think any qualified resident who wished to do so, could be a volunteer proofer.

3 – Back to the beginning of the “Scope of Work...” – **I am against seeking a “qualified firm” or any “interested qualified individual” who is not a Town resident**. Our Town editor needs to be a caring,

knowledgeable, qualified, and concerned Town resident! The editor must be an entity onto his or her self. The editor must maintain a completely neutral stance/attitude, never allowing his/her opinions to creep into his/her duties as editor. I believe I did this; I grew to like and admire every mayor I worked with, and I supported them whole-heartedly, whether or not I had voted for them in the election. **The editor needs to be a Town resident and a neutral resident. This makes the editor an asset to the Town, the Mayor, and the Council.** With a Town resident, the Town always comes first – not so, with a non resident, paid to do a job. But again, I must reiterate: **We already have two good editors; why does the Council want to find a new one?**

4 – I disagree with the statements: *“All content in the Newsletter not received directly from the Town must be attributed. No periodic article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town.”* Not sure what the “All Content...attributed” sentence means. Every month, I received from “the Town;” the Mayor's, Chief's, and UPPWD Director's columns, the minutes (from Town secretary/adm. asst.), new resolutions passed (from Town lawyer), articles of notice (re stream committee reports from Com. Chair), first responders info (from Com.Chair), and more of a similar nature. I also received notices from Town groups and clubs, notices about events being held in Town and nearby (and now, more than half of this type of info has been discontinued). I am assuming the Council voted against having all the worthwhile local events (CPAM, Riversdale, farmers markets, CP & GB festivals, area plays at UM, GB etc.) reported any more, in order to cut down on the size/cost of the Newsletter.

HOWEVER...I question why articles can't be added without permission from “the Town;” I'm assuming “the Town” means the Council. But if the editor's job description is written that the Newsletter only will contain articles originating from Council activity and the following organizations (a, b, c, etc), then why is that sentence even necessary? Are the current editors including articles in the Newsletter that the Council doesn't want? I feel those statements are unnecessary and sound a bit...dictatorial.

5 - **I also don't understand why the editor's duties wouldn't include content editing.** I often thought of items that were overlooked, that needed to be mentioned in a particular month, as well as the wrong person cited for something, or a school not congratulated for an honor. All these items are content. **It's the duty of an editor not only to make the publication shine, but also those who contribute to the publication.** The editing job should not be dissolved into being “chief proofer.” It dumbs down the Newsletter itself not to have whatever individual “spark” your editor has to offer!

6 – **I also question giving preference to bids with a quick turnaround.** Anyone can do a terrible or sloppy job quickly. **The Council should choose a talented, interested, Town resident to be the editor.** I assume we all still want a Newsletter we really can enjoy reading. So choose an editor who will give you a newsletter that he/she is proud to produce each month – someone who can stick to your requirements and still add a spark to the publication. And if you find two, then choose the one with the faster turnaround. **But really, we already have that. If our current editors haven't quit, why is the Council even looking for a new editor??**

PS: I searched the Town Charter and found the following information (on next page)

ALL MENTION OF THE NEWSLETTER FALLS UNDER THE DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

Many of the items that are Council responsibility can play a major part in supporting a wonderful, delightful-to-read Town Newsletter. Please note:

Section 402. Powers and Duties of Council

(a) General Powers.

The Common Council shall have the power to pass all such ordinances and resolutions not contrary to the constitution, the State of Maryland or this Charter as it may deem necessary for the good government of the Town; for the protection and preservation of the Town's property, rights, and privileges; for the preservation of peace and good order; for securing persons and property from violence, danger, or destruction; and for the protection and promotion of the health, safety, comfort, convenience, welfare, and happiness of the residents of and visitors in the Town.

(b) Specific Powers. The Council shall have, in addition, the power to pass ordinances not contrary to the laws and Constitution of this State, for the specific purposes provided in the remaining subparagraphs of this subsection.

(iv) Appropriations. **To appropriate municipal moneys for any purpose within the powers of the Council**

(i) Advertising. **To provide for advertising for the purposes of the Town, for printing and publishing statements as to the business of the Town.**

(xvi) Departments. To create, change, and abolish offices, departments, or agencies, other than the offices, departments, and agencies established by this Charter; to assign additional functions or duties to offices, departments, or agencies established by this Charter, **but not including the power to discontinue or assign to any other office, department or agency any function or duty assigned by this Charter to a particular office, department, or agency**

xx) Finances. To levy and collect ad valorem property taxes; **to expend municipal funds for any public purpose**; to have general management and control of the finances of the Town

(1 iii) Town Newsletter. **To publish and distribute a Town newsletter to provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town, to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance, provided, however, that publication of such notices in the Town newsletter shall not be considered a substitute for any requirement for advertisement, in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town or the posting of notice in a public place.**

(1 iv) Saving Clause. The enumeration of powers in this section is not to be construed as limiting the powers of the Town to the several subjects mentioned.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Fwd: town newsletter

Kristi Janzen <kristibjanzen@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 27, 2014 at 11:35 AM

To: Heidi Sorensen <heidisor@hotmail.com>, Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>, Ward 5 <ward5@upmd.org>

Hi Heidi, I just realized I can't attend the UP news meeting tonight, as it overlaps with back-to-school night at UPES. So forget my phone message to you.

Instead, since you are on the committee, I am forwarding to you this email exchange I had with the mayor. In it, he seems reasonable and it seems like he wants to maintain the independence of the newsletter. Editorial guidelines, which he says he wants, also seem reasonable, and it seems like he is not trying to use the newsletter for his own political purposes, according to his email. However, around town, people are talking about other things, grand plans and big changes, etc, and since I don't know the origin of the concerns exactly, and since he is new, I can't judge what is going on very well. I very much appreciate your even hand in this, and hope you will be able to find an appropriate solution that maintains the independence of the newsletter, treats the editors fairly and keeps townspeople informed.

Thanks for all your hard work.

Kristi

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mayor** <mayor@upmd.org>

Date: Mon, Aug 18, 2014 at 10:43 AM

Subject: RE: town newsletter

To: Kristi Janzen <kristibjanzen@gmail.com>

Cc: James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

Kristi—

Thank you for the suggestions re: the Scope of Work. I'll pass them on (as yours) to the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which will recommend re: the Scope.

There ought to be some editorial guidelines for the newsletter which are approved and occasionally reviewed by the Council, and updated as needed. These editorial guidelines are for the editor to interpret and enforce with appeal to the Mayor. Though the guidelines should reflect some understanding that the Mayor's column is a signed column and there's some room for opinion, I think the Mayor's column needs to follow the guidelines as well—be informative, not argumentative, no political endorsements or criticism, generally "feel good" items. While there shouldn't be issues with the Mayor's column, I believe that any issues which do arise should be taken up by the Council after publication, in the form of looking at whether the editorial guidelines are sufficient. I'll pass that on to the Committee as well.

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor

Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue

University Park, Maryland

Office: (301) 927-4262

From: Kristi Janzen [mailto:kristibjanzen@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, August 15, 2014 6:17 PM

To: Mayor

Cc: James Gekas

Subject: Re: town newsletter

Hi Mayor (& Jim),

Thanks for your reply. Your perspective sounds good in this email, and the Sept newsletter seems fine as well. I'm glad you're stressing the informational content, and it's good to hear that from you personally. Given your explanation here, it sounds like everyone is on the same page, so there shouldn't be any problems going forward. I wondered what was going on, so that's why I asked Jim about it, so now I know your side of the story. I hadn't intended on bothering you with this, but I guess Jim thought it would be easier for me to hear straight from you.

In terms of the scope of work, I know from my own freelancing that the more details, the better, such as listing deadlines and lengths of time that people have for responding and editing, etc. Perhaps a definition of "timely" should be included, so people know what to expect. Another thought: Do you want to say what sections must be included in each issue? And then say which sections could be included, depending on space? I imagine there could be confusion about what to include if space is tight, so maybe one could state who has final say on content, if something is disputed -- does that go to the council, mayor or editor?

Overall, I agree that the newsletter is good as is, so there's not a lot to "fix."

Best,

Kristi

On Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 5:28 PM, Mayor <mayor@upmd.org> wrote:

Kristi--

Mr. Gekas forwarded your e-mail to me, so you get my response: I would be disturbed by the "recent developments" you seem to refer to as well if they were true, but they aren't. I have not proposed any change to the newsletter, and certainly wouldn't propose one which would insert political blather. I believe the value of the newsletter is in its informational content, hear that from throughout the Town, and personally resist efforts to diminish that informational value and insert politics.

As a journalist, you're aware that we have to be sure of our information; we're responsible for the accuracy of what we write. I read the list serve, too, though I no longer respond on it. Still, I've been responding directly to people who have written or cc'd me, with the following response (which Mr. Gekas has seen before):

Contrary to what erroneous reports may have circulated, I am making no effort to remove Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart as editors of the newsletter. Nor have I made any changes to the newsletter other than some minor tweaking of the Town's contact information to make it more clear, an approach to invite responses to me re: the Mayor's column, and a suggestion that authorship of material submitted as part of Town News be attributed.

The problem is that--contrary both to best practice and Maryland law--the editors have no written contract with the Town laying out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town. My approach--also the expressed desire of the Council as I understand it--is to correct that by getting the editors under a proper contract. Because of what the Town pays Todd and Bridget for editing and producing the newsletter (not including printing), Town policy and best practice both require that the contracting be put out to bid via a Request for Proposals. That is something which the Mayor, per the Town Charter, is charged to do following our standard bid procedures ... though the Council if it chooses can override those procedures. Accordingly, I have drafted a "Scope of Work" describing the newsletter as it is, and have asked the Council to suggest revisions or additions. That is what is going on now. The Council referred it to the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which will meet on Thursday evening to discuss this, and will provide its recommendations to me by the end of September.

I met with Todd and Bridget nearly two weeks ago to discuss all of these topics, and approached our conversation with an assumption that they were the incumbent editors and that we were working together to get the newsletter out each month.

I would add that the newsletter was established originally in the Mayor's office, was at one time produced entirely by the Mayor, and the editors have been largely given free rein to copy edit since Flo Harris became the first editor of the Newsletter in the 1980s. The proposed Scope of Work, which is attached, would not change that; indeed, it seeks to describe the Newsletter as it is produced today. Mayors before me have insisted on having final editorial say on the Mayor's Column, which the Mayor writes, the editors copy edit, and which is signed by the Mayor; I will continue to insist on that. That is consistent with what John Brunner did when he was Mayor, and which John Tabori did. I am not seeking any more editorial control than I have already and which John Brunner and John Tabori had.

The Town of University Park is the publisher of the newsletter, and the editor works within that. The Mayor, per Section 401 (a) of the Town Charter is "the chief executive officer and the head of the administrative branch of the Town government" and so is the publishers agent. The impetus for this proposal is--as I have stated--a desire for Mayor and Council to get the newsletter editors under a proper, written contract which lays out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town.

I would welcome your comments on the attached Scope of Work, and will be glad to discuss it. For your information (please don't share it further, as it hasn't been through the editors, yet), I have also attached my Draft Mayor's column for the September 2014 Newsletter, just sent to the editors.

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor

Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue

University Park, Maryland

Office: (301) 927-4262

-----Original Message-----

From: James Gekas [mailto:jcg20782@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, August 13, 2014 2:48 PM

To: Mayor

Subject: Fw: town newsletter

Forgot to include the Mayor....

--- On Wed, 8/13/14, James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com> wrote:

> From: James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

> Subject: Fw: town newsletter

> To: "ward 1" <ward1@upmd.org>, "Ward 3" <ward3@upmd.org>, "Ward 5"

> <ward5@upmd.org>

> Cc: "Ward 6" <ward6@upmd.org>, "Ward 7" <ward7@upmd.org>, "Linda

> Verrill" <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>

> Date: Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 2:41 PM Kristi,

>

> I'm forwarding your comments to the Rules Committee Members since they

> are presently soliciting public comments and will address the scope of

> work for an Editor of the Newsletter.

> The recommendation will go to the Mayor by September 30 who will

> negotiate a contract for services and be approved/amended by the

> Council.

>

> Regards,

>

> Jim

>

>

>

>

> --- On Mon, 8/11/14, Kristi Janzen <kristibjanzen@gmail.com>

> wrote:

>

> > From: Kristi Janzen <kristibjanzen@gmail.com>

> > Subject: town newsletter

> > To: "James Gekas" <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

> > Date: Monday, August 11, 2014, 11:54 AM Hi Jim,I just wanted to

> > check in on this mess, which I have just

> heard

> > about. As a professional full-time journalist before I became a mom,

> > and a freelancer for the last 15 years, I

> am

> > disturbed by recent developments. Here are some of my

> > concerns:

> > 1. The town newsletter should not be a mouthpiece for the mayor to

> > post his political opinions.2. It will be costly to add political

> > pieces, in terms of

> printing

> > extra pages. I would argue we need to shrink the

> printing

> > costs of the newsletter, actually, such as by putting meeting

> > minutes online only, not expand it. It is quite

> long

> > already.

> > I have heard that the mayor is trying to change rules about how the
> > newsletter is done, but I am not aware
> that
> > there are any reasons for such changes. What would they
> be?
> > What is going on, on this matter?
> > Thanks!
> >
> > Kristi
> >

--

Kristi Bahrenburg Janzen
(202) 271 1478 (mobile)

--

Kristi Bahrenburg Janzen
(202) 271 1478 (mobile)



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Written statement to "rules" committee

Arlene Christiansen <arlenechristiansen@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 26, 2014 at 11:08 PM

To: Heidi Anne Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>, Ward 3 <Ward3@upmd.org>, ward 1

<Ward1@upmd.org>

Please consider the following points as you continue to discuss the scope of work for a newsletter editor.

1. The newsletter was established according to the charter by vote of the council during the period when Ruth Lutwack was mayor. (Article IV "Powers and Duties of the Council", Section 402. b "Specific Powers. The Council shall have, in addition, the power to pass ordinances not contrary to the laws and Constitution of this State, for the specific purpose provided in the remaining subparagraphs of this subsection." (liii): "Town Newsletter. To publish and distribute a Town newsletter to provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town, to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance, provided, however, that publication of such notices in the Town newsletter shall not be considered a substitute for any requirement for advertisement, in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town or the posting of notice in a public place.")
2. The newsletter has always had and should continue to have an independent newsletter editor.
3. The editor should be a resident of the town. Only a resident has the relationship with other residents and with the various groups represented in the news of the town.
4. End any possible confusion regarding ownership by including the following information from the charter in the newsletter on page 1, preferably associated with the title of the newsletter and the name/s of the editor/s. Ex. Town of University Park Newsletter, "published and distributed by the Town Council" edited by ____.
5. The newsletter editor should have a contract. Given that was not done in the past and has been brought forward as an issue during a time when we currently have an editor, the council can choose to allow the editor to continue service with the understanding that it will be under the terms of a contract.
6. While it is true that a bidding process (RFP) is required when a contract exceeds \$10,000 annually, it is also true that this was not the case when the current editor was selected. The Council may do as it has chosen to do several times in the past: choose to waive this rule given that we currently have an editor who is able to continue service. When that service terminates in the future an RFP can be issued. Note that when the Charter was written it included the following statement in Section 401 (b):
"Each officer, holding appointment on the effective date of this Charter, shall continue to hold office for such term as the Mayor and Common Council shall designate or until a successor is duly appointed."
Also note that a personnel manual was just approved by the Council with changes to rules and regulations regarding the hiring and firing of officers of the Town yet those officers continue to serve and were not asked to either terminate employment nor reapply for their current positions.
7. The suggestion that a council member could respond to a political opinion included by the Mayor in his newsletter column a month later will not work in practice. The "opinion" may be accepted and acted upon before the next month's newsletter arrives with an opposing opinion or factual correction. Four weeks is a distinct disadvantage for the party responding.
8. The mayor's column if it is to continue to be included in the newsletter should be of reasonable length not to exceed a specified length. It should be made clear to the reader that it is the writing of one person and does not represent an official position of the Council.
9. Use of the term "The Town" should be eliminated as it is ambiguous and misleading. The Town cannot hold an official position. Rather it should be clearly stated whether it is a position taken by vote of the Council, a position represented by a committee advising the Council, or an individual, etc.

10. Before the newsletter is sent to the printer, it should be reviewed by more than the Mayor and/or his staff/employees. At least one member of the Council should also review for this final simple copy edit. This edit is primarily to catch those small inaccuracies (a date that was perhaps inaccurate when given to the editor for example) or perhaps to catch a false attribution or other potentially political opinion (a council member writes a committee report and states that the council will vote to approve when the council has yet to vote for example). However this edit is not to be a rewrite of the editing done by the editor (changing sentence structure according to one's own style of writing for example).

11. The Council should be responsible for what is published in the newsletter because the Council "publishes and distributes" the newsletter. It is also the Council that approves the budget for the newsletter.

12. Many residents are frustrated that it is difficult if not nearly impossible to participate in discussions of issues before the Council because it is almost impossible to get information about the agenda items. I urge the Council to avoid a bidding process for a newsletter editor at this time when we have an excellent editor team currently. Time spent to get a scope of work to guide the Council in getting a contract for the current editor/s is time enough spent when so many more pressing matters are at hand. I would prefer Council to spend more time immediately on fixing the Town website and on putting into place the Granicus legislative suite (software) that would allow the public to click on an item on an agenda and link that item to the written documents associated with that motion and to that specific recorded section of the video of the council meeting. By the time I was sent a copy of the recently approved "Personnel Manual", the Council had already voted to approve it.

13. The minutes would need less correcting and thus the times when an error slips by council members and is sent to the editor to include in the Newsletter with errors, if the Mayor and Council would adopt a policy of placing a sign in sheet on the table near the recording secretary. All who attend the meeting including residents, presenters, newspaper reporters, etc. would be asked to print their name legibly and perhaps whether a resident of UP and if so, in which ward.

14. An editor is needed for copy editing. I have over the years submitted items (articles) to the newsletter editor whether that was Flo, Bridget or Todd. It was extremely helpful to have someone work with me to finalize the piece whether it was a narrative or a flyer or just a few sentences to be included in news of residents around town (a wedding, etc.). I have heard from others who do not feel comfortable writing even a paragraph for publication and want to be able to submit the basic information and count in an editor who is a town resident, a neighbor if you will, to work with them to turn it into a readable piece.

15. This newsletter is unique, just as our town is unique. No other town around is solely residential yet has the government and services we have. It is a small town in a semi urban area. However, our mayor is both administrator and elected official (political) but in a small government where the mayor's powers and duties can too easily become out of balance with the council and legislative branch. Again the council needs to keep some of the power and duty of the newsletter and its editor.

Finally, and of great importance, please be sure that the rules committee report is discussed by the full council in a public meeting. All council members should be involved in the discussion and be in the same room to have that discussion. Residents should have an opportunity to hear a discussion of the full council on this significant matter that is clearly of concern to many in our town. Also members of the council should have an opportunity to discuss this issue with and in front of each other.

I hope you will also choose to treat the current editors with respect, fairness, and empathy. For those of us who are fortunate enough to have pensions, it might not be immediately appreciated how much this work means financially to this couple who fairly recently had to close their small business. Yet during these past months, although all comments have been in praise of their work, their financial plans have been on hold not knowing whether or not they would be awarded a contract.

Sincerely,

Arlene Christiansen



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

newsletter

Anne Headley <asheadley@verizon.net>

Tue, Aug 26, 2014 at 12:54 PM

To: ward5@upmd.org

Cc: Jim Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

Dear Ms. Sorensen,

Thank you for all the time you are devoting to the various issues relating to the town newsletter. This is a note thanking you for your dedication to a fair hearing of these issues. I definitely feel that there should be a hearing before the full council so that town residents may be heard. Freedom of the press starts at the very lowest level.

Anne Headley

Jim, thank you for continuing to represent ward 2 in such a wonderfully responsive way. Keep it up!

Anne

Anne Headley

asheadley@verizon.net

Blog: www.anneheadley.wordpress.com

Now available on amazon.com for the kindle:

Reflections on Resumes: Taking a Second Look



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

UP newsletter

jayson amster <j.amsterlaw@gmail.com>
To: Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 25, 2014 at 12:08 PM

HS:

Heidi Sorensen

I have read with interest the discussion about the Town newsletter and previously expressed my view that it remain independent to preserve its (reliability?). The view that there is a substantial difference between fact and opinion misses the essential truth that opinion can be expressed by silence or by stating one truth while ignoring others.

For example: the Cafritz litigation, especially the appeal and its potential impact on the development, has largely been ignored except for minutes of Council meetings and win/loss in court. Give the mayor control and the newsletter will reflect his "factual opinion."

Why not lower the fee to \$10,000 and give independence to the current editors?

j.amster

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The information contained in this electronic message and any attached documents is privileged, confidential, and protected from disclosure. It may be an attorney-client communication and, as such, is privileged and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, note that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of the contents of this electronic message or any attached documents is prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please destroy it and notify us immediately by telephone (301/627-5400) or by electronic mail (j.amsterlaw@gmail.com). Thank you.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Forwarded constituent e-mail on newsletter.

2 messages

Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>

Sun, Sep 21, 2014 at 4:48 PM

Reply-To: Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>

To: Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: scorpio70r <scorpio70r@gmail.com>**To:** Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2014 10:15 AM**Subject:** Re: Please vote for me on Tuesday

Too bad. The Newsletter is supported by our tax dollars. (I just got mine and UP's portion again increased.) If there's a need to express oneself on issues that are political and personal, one's own funds should be used, not the public's. That he "vetoed" the policy (which I don't think is authorized) and left out that fact makes me suspect his motives. He's caused a lot of division, especially his support of Caffritz' project, and now this---very disturbing. You should think carefully about his motives, which stem from unabated ambition and insufferable arrogance.

Richard

On Thu, Aug 14, 2014 at 6:48 PM, Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you. I will do my best as your council representative.

I would be happy to chat in person about the newsletter issue. I don't know that I can express all of my feelings in an e-mail but, in brief, and as I commented at the Policy and Rules meeting, I think the mayor should be able to express his political opinion in the newsletter. I don't think the mayor should say incendiary things about other council members in the newsletter. I think that if the mayor and the editor have a disagreement about what is appropriate to put in the newsletter there should be a third party (or editorial board) decision.

Please let me know if you want to chat about the newsletter or other issues.

Thank you,
Linda

Linda Verrill
301-927-6743 (eve. & weekends)
240-402-1765 (day)
240-472-1983 (cell)
Linda_Verrill@yahoo.com

From: scorpio70r <scorpio70r@gmail.com>
To: Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2014 5:05 PM
Subject: Re: Please vote for me on Tuesday

Hi Linda,

Congratulations. I'm sure you'll do well. What are your views on the Newsletter issue?

Richard

On Sun, Aug 10, 2014 at 7:35 PM, Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Ward 4 Residents,

I hope your summer is going well. I just returned from a long vacation and feel relaxed, refreshed, and ready to get down to business. Even though I'm running unopposed for Ward 4 Council Representative, your endorsement and support are still very important to me. Please take the time to come out this Tuesday, August 12, and give me your vote. Polling is at Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Please contact me with questions, concerns, ideas, and suggestions about our ward, town, and local area. Once elected, I will do my best to serve you.

Thank you,
Linda Verrill

p.s. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from this list.

Linda Verrill
301-927-6743 (eve. & weekends)
240-402-1765 (day)
240-472-1983 (cell)
Linda_Verrill@yahoo.com

Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>
To: Linda Verrill <linda_verrill@yahoo.com>

Sun, Sep 21, 2014 at 5:21 PM

Received.
[Quoted text hidden]



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: Town Newsletter - Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Michele Leonardi <mpleonardi@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 8, 2014 at 3:48 PM

To: Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Hi Heidi- thank you for holding the meeting last night. I would like to be informed of any further committee meetings on this issue. I have a comment that I thought of after I left last night. Why do we need an RFP in the first place? I understand, I guess, that we should have a contract with the editor spelling out requirements etc. But, I do not feel like the newsletter is broken- I don't understand why we can't just produce a contract with our current editors. I think they do a fabulous job. So again, why the RFP? What is the objection by the Mayor and/or Council with our current editors? Thank you, Michele Leonardi

On Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 7:39 PM, Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

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This message is intended only for the recipient to whom it is addressed. Please do not forward this e-mail to any other person, group, entity, listserv, website, or group of people without my express consent.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: Town Newsletter - Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Gary and Jo Williams <gajowills@msn.com>

Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 4:06 PM

To: Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

I write to remind residents that the minutes of each town meeting, as transcribed by the council secretary, are read aloud at the beginning of the subsequent town meeting for corrections and final approval by our elected town council members. This is a key rule of democratic procedure in *Robert's Rules of Order*, and while that famous manual is not strictly observed by our council, this procedure is observed in every council meeting that I have attended over the years. So, our elected representatives are responsible for the final record of proceedings and by extension, for their accurate reproduction in the newsletter.

I am open to evidence, but I am very, very skeptical about the current tales of evil, manipulative mayors. Our community has been well served by its mayors, and Mayor Tabori gave years of generous service and prudent, resourceful guidance to improving its infrastructure.

Gary Jay Williams

Date: Mon, 4 Aug 2014 16:39:30 -0700

From: heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com

[Quoted text hidden]



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Concerns about proposed changes regarding town newsletter

Laurie Morrissey <lauriemorrissey919@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 2:21 PM

To: ward5@upmd.org, Thompson@upmd.org

Hello Heidi and Joe,

I wanted to let you know that I have serious concerns about the changes that the Mayor is proposing for the town newsletter. My initial reaction is: "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." This seems like an obvious power grab. Why on Earth does the Mayor want to have final say over editorial content of the newsletter? It smacks of violating the freedom of the press.

The Warrens have done a terrific job after taking it over. Is this some kind of personal issue he has with them?

Also, of all the issues facing University Park, it seems that the Mayor would have better things to focus on. I am not a supporter of the Mayor anyway, and this kind of effort is exactly the kind of thing I feared he would do.

I've been a professional writer and editor for more than 20 years myself and I know a good editorial process and product when I see one. We have one now. Why does the Mayor want to circumvent decades old rules so he can personally control the newsletter content?

Please consider voting against this change.

Sincerely,
Laurie Morrissey

6607 44th Avenue



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Heitkemper, Sarah <sarah.heitkemper@boland.com>

Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 3:13 PM

To: "ward5@upmd.org" <ward5@upmd.org>, "ward3@upmd.org" <ward3@upmd.org>, "ward1@upmd.org" <ward1@upmd.org>

Dear Heidi, Joe, and Brad,

I am not sure I will be able to attend the meeting tomorrow night (my son has football practice from 6-8 in Silver Spring). I do want more information on the "issue" with regard to the Newsletter.

There is a difference between a NEWSLETTER and a NEWSPAPER. Journalists work for newspapers and are to be given journalistic freedom. Newsletters are prepared by employees of the organization, and the content of the newsletter is to reflect the organization's priorities. I'm not sure everyone is on the same page with this distinction.

I edit my company's semi-monthly newsletter, so I have a bit of experience here. I have "heard" that one issue is that the Newsletter was being edited for content, not just grammar and spelling. Maybe there's something else there, but I know my company president wouldn't be happy about that either. In particular, the Mayors column is from him. They are his words. They should not be changed without his approval. That seems obvious, so I hope that isn't the issue.

Finally, perhaps a simple solution would be for the entire Council to be given final review. Sort of like meeting minutes. The Newsletter could be submitted to them, they have the opportunity to read it and offer any objections, and then it is entered into the record. Maybe the council could become more involved too. Maybe they could each submit a column with information on the goings on in their Ward – that would be really nice! This could offer an opportunity to not just solve an apparent dispute, but even improve our town communications!

Thank you for listening. I look forward to your response!

Sarah Heitkemper

4308 Woodberry St.

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Sorensen, Heidi A.

From: Mayor <mayor@upmd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2014 4:24 PM
Subject: RE: {Univ. Park List} Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Chris—

To be careful ... I am NOT saying that Todd and Bridget will be the editors a year from now, only that we are not proceeding out of any effort to remove Todd or Bridget or to do anything other than put this on a responsible basis. Todd and Bridget will be invited to bid, the field will be level, and I will bring a recommendation and options to the Council for approval.

--Len--

From: C. P. Aubry [mailto:aubrycp@elitemail.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2014 3:54 PM
To: Mayor; James Gekas
Cc: Ward 5; Ward 3; ward1@umd.edu
Subject: Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Len,
Thank you for clearing this up.

My apologies. Once again I dine on corvus, having responded foolishly to another Listserv tempest in a teacup.

I'm ecstatic that all my fears are put to rest and to learn this is but an administrative exercise.

Chris

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014, at 03:17 PM, Mayor wrote:

Chris—

Thank you for writing, and for cc'ing me. I've been responding directly to people who have written or cc'd me, with the following response:

Contrary to what erroneous reports may have circulated, I am making no effort to remove Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart as editors of the newsletter. Nor have I made any changes to the newsletter other than some minor tweaking of the Town's contact information to make it more clear, an approach to invite responses to me re: the Mayor's column, and a suggestion that authorship of material submitted as part of Town News be attributed.

The problem is that--contrary both to best practice and Maryland law--the editors have no written contract with the Town laying out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town. My approach--also the expressed desire of the Council, as I understand it--is to correct that by getting the editors under a proper contract. Because of what the Town pays Todd and Bridget for editing and producing the newsletter (not including printing), Town policy and best practice both require that the contracting be put out to bid via a Request for Proposals. That is something which the Mayor, per the Town Charter, is charged to do following our standard bid procedures ... though the Council if it chooses can override those procedures. Accordingly, I have drafted a "Scope of Work" describing the newsletter as it is, and have asked the Council to suggest revisions or additions. That is what is going on now. The Council referred it to the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which will meet on Thursday evening to discuss this, and will provide its recommendations to me by the end of September.

I met with Todd and Bridget nearly two weeks ago to discuss all of these topics, and approached our conversation with an assumption that they were the incumbent editors and that we were working together to get the newsletter out each month.

I would add that this is not at all about editorial control. The Council has as yet passed no Ordinance re: the newsletter or established editorial guidelines for the newsletter other than the minimal guidance in the Town Charter. The newsletter was established originally in the Mayor's office, was at one time produced entirely by the Mayor, and since Flo Harris became the first editor of the Newsletter, the editors have been largely given free rein to copy edit. The proposed Scope of Work, which is attached, would not change that; indeed, it seeks to describe the Newsletter as it is produced today. Mayors before me have insisted on having final editorial say on the Mayor's Column, which the Mayor writes, the editors copy edit, and which is signed by the Mayor; I will continue to insist on that. I am not seeking any more editorial control than I have already, and will continue to insist on the independence of the newsletter editor(s) in copy editing the newsletter.

The Mayor, per Section 401 (a) of the Town Charter is “the chief executive officer and the head of the administrative branch of the Town government.” The Town of University Park is the publisher of the newsletter, and the editor works within that. The impetus for this proposal is—as I have stated—a desire for Mayor and Council to get the newsletter editors under a proper, written contract which lays out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town.

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor

Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue

University Park, Maryland

Office: (301) 927-4262

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor

Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue

University Park, Maryland

Office: (301) 927-4262

From: C. P. Aubry [mailto:aubrycp@elitemail.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2014 2:02 PM
To: James Gekas
Cc: Mayor; Ward 5; Ward 3; ward1@umd.edu
Subject: Fwd: Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Council Member Gekas,

This makes me nervous. Have the Warrens asked to be released of their Newsletter responsibilities? If not, then why is this happening?

I object to taking this out of the Warren's most capable hands and putting it up for bid. If the intent is for the mayor to gain editorial authority, I would consider such motivation very disturbing. I don't know if the town's charter grants the Mayor that level of authority, but I would hope not. Common Law?

Why not just tape everything and have a Googlebot transcribe it? Why have humans do what is being proposed here? It is not possible to be the editor of a serial publication without having editorial authority over the content, especially if the number of pages is a constraint.

I would most especially like to know the impetus for this proposal. Thank you,

:Chris Aubry

4207 Tuckerman St.

----- Original message -----

From: Debra Suarez <Suarez@debrasuarez.com>

To: Mary <meplath@gmail.com>

Cc: UP listserve <univpark@googlegroups.com>

Subject: Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Date: Tue, 5 Aug 2014 20:43:22 -0400

Hi Neighbors,

The statement of work is posted on the Town Web site with the notice of Thursday's meeting. (http://www.upmd.org/?t=ce_news&mode=dialog&id=555)

Go to the attachment on the upper left.

Debra

On Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 8:08 PM, Mary <meplath@gmail.com> wrote:

I would also be interested in that info.

Mary

On Monday, August 4, 2014 12:03:29 PM UTC-4, Maureen Stone wrote:

This is in response to the comment called "Town Newsletter" that was circulated on August 1, about the UP newsletter. Could you please insert it into the next town listserve? Thank you very much.

Maureen Stone

Sadly, if the Town Mayor gets his way, by the next Council meeting, the Warrens will no longer have anything to do with the newsletter, nor will the residents get an unbiased view of what the Mayor and Council are doing. The Mayor and our past Mayor (who briefly removed the Warrens from their positions and then backed down) have been upset whenever they do not get final editorial control over everything that appears in the Newsletter, so the Mayor has circulated a proposal to contract out the preparation of the Newsletter (likely at increased expense to the Town) to a contractor who will be required to give him final editorial control as a condition of the contract. This insistence by the executive authority of the Town to control and censor what the residents are told about the various Town Executive Board meetings and activities is unnecessary, a waste of funds, childish, and frankly, insulting. I hope Town

residents will let their councilperson know that in an open society, the control of the free flow of information is inappropriate and that if the Mayor presses this issue, then NO such rigged newsletter should be funded, and Town residents will endeavor to have observers at the various meetings post reports of Town happenings on this blog (right after we circulate a petition to recall the Mayor). Victor and Maureen Stone

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Maureen Stone, PhD, Professor
Depts of Neural and Pain Sciences and Orthodontics
Director, Vocal Tract Visualization Lab
U. of Maryland Dental School
650 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD, 21201
tel:410-706-1269, fax:410-706-0865
web:speech.umaryland.edu

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The UP Google Group listserv is a neighbor to neighbor listserv run by UP residents. It is not monitored by elected or appointed officials.

You received this message because you are subscribed to a topic in the Google Groups "Univ. Park Listserve" group.

To unsubscribe from this topic, visit

<https://groups.google.com/d/topic/univpark/lyHbBUzSn18/unsubscribe>.

To unsubscribe from this group and all its topics, send an email to

univpark+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To post to this group, send email to univpark@googlegroups.com.

Visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/univpark>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

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To post to this group, send email to univpark@googlegroups.com.

Visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/univpark>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

Email had 1 attachment:

- SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR.docx
26k (application/vnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.wordprocessingml.document)



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Fwd: Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

C. P. Aubry <aubrycp@elitemail.org>

Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 2:02 PM

To: James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>

Cc: Mayor <mayor@upmd.org>, ward5@upmd.org, ward3@upmd.org, ward1@umd.edu

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To post to this group, send email to univpark@googlegroups.com.

Visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/univpark>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

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Visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/univpark>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

 **11-749-1407257564_UPTownNewsletterRFP.pdf**
230K



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Re: {Univ. Park List} Re: Town Newsletter - Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

Barbara Morris <bmorrisphd@verizon.net>
To: Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 9:00 PM

Dear Councilmember Sorensen,

Thank you for informing the Town about the meeting on Thursday night. I am in Ithaca, NY visiting universities with my daughter this week, so will be unable to attend the meeting. I would like to let you know that I would like to keep the Town Newsletter the way that it is—with an independent writer and editor. I do not want to make any changes to its current newsletter system. I do not think that the Mayor should be permitted to get involved in editing the Newsletter. It sounds like an issue similar to freedom of the press. We should not allow our elected officials to influence the reporting of Town news.

Thank you so much for your service to the Town. I have seen you in action at a number of Town meetings and am impressed with your serious dedication to our Town.

Best,

Barbara Morris

From: Heidi Sorensen
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2014 7:39 PM
To: univpark@googlegroups.com
Subject: {Univ. Park List} Re: Town Newsletter - Re: for submission to the UP town listserve

The Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which I chair, will be holding a meeting Thursday night at Town Hall from 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. to solicit comments on a proposed Statement of Work for the Town Newsletter. I would encourage anyone who is interested to attend and/or to contact me (off-list) for more information. The draft statement of work will also be available tomorrow on the Town website. The meeting notice is available at:
<http://www.upmd.org/docs/11-749-1406837636.pdf>

Thank you,

Heidi Sorensen
Councilmember, Ward 5

On Monday, August 4, 2014 6:33:50 PM UTC-4, Debra wrote:

Hi All --

Can someone please re-post the initial email that is referenced below? (the "Town Newsletter") -- I missed the original post, but would like the information -- not sure what is going on with our Newsletter.

thanks!
Debra

On Monday, August 4, 2014 12:03:29 PM UTC-4, Maureen Stone wrote:

This is in response to the comment called "Town Newsletter" that was circulated on August 1, about the UP newsletter. Could you please insert it into the next town listserve? Thank you very much.

Maureen Stone

Sadly, if the Town Mayor gets his way, by the next Council meeting, the Warrens will no longer have anything to do with the newsletter, nor will the residents get an unbiased view of what the Mayor and Council are doing. The Mayor and our past Mayor (who briefly removed the Warrens from their positions and then backed down) have been upset whenever they do not get final editorial control over everything that appears in the Newsletter, so the Mayor has circulated a proposal to contract out the preparation of the Newsletter (likely at increased expense to the Town) to a contractor who will be required to give him final editorial control as a condition of the contract. This insistence by the executive authority of the Town to control and censor what the residents are told about the various Town Executive Board meetings and activities is unnecessary, a waste of funds, childish, and frankly, insulting. I hope Town residents will let their councilperson know that in an open society, the control of the free flow of information is inappropriate and that if the Mayor presses this issue, then NO such rigged newsletter should be funded, and Town residents will endeavor to have observers at the various meetings post reports of Town happenings on this blog (right after we circulate a petition to recall the Mayor). Victor and Maureen Stone

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Maureen Stone, PhD, Professor
Depts of Neural and Pain Sciences and Orthodontics
Director, Vocal Tract Visualization Lab
U. of Maryland Dental School
650 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD, 21201
tel:410-706-1269, fax:410-706-0865
web:speech.umaryland.edu

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The UP Google Group listserv is a neighbor to neighbor listserv run by UP residents. It is not monitored by elected or appointed officials.

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Univ. Park Listserve" group. To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to univpark+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com. To post to this group, send email to univpark@googlegroups.com. Visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/univpark>. For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Town Newsletter

Sarah Starrett <sjstarrett@comcast.net>

Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 5:58 PM

To: UP Ward5 <ward5@upmd.org>, UP Ward1 <ward1@upmd.org>, Ward 3 <ward3@upmd.org>

Cc: UP Ward2 <ward2@upmd.org>

Dear Committee Chair, Councilmember Heidi Sorensen (ward5@upmd.org), Committee Member, Councilmember Joe Thompson (ward1@upmd.org), Committee Member, Councilmember Bradlee Hess (ward3@upmd.org):

Please revise the proposed "Scope of Work for the Town Newsletter Editor", as presented by Mayor Len Carey at the most recent council meeting in which he proposes **that the editor will no longer be responsible for content editing, but that the mayor will control all content in the newsletter.**

The Town Charter in Article IV, Section 402 describes the Powers and Duties of the Council including b1iii: Town Newsletter. "To publish and distribute a Town newsletter to provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town, to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance.

I have been very happy with the work of our neighbors Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart on the Newsletter, and would like to see them continue. I do not want our newsletter produced at Town Hall or to be controlled and edited solely by the Mayor. I also urge you to encourage the Council to act as the publisher and distributor of the newsletter as stated in the charter.

Please revise the proposed ordinance and Scope of Work as instructed by the council last May (4-0), based on recommendations from your committee, to write an ordinance to be the basis for how the Council would publish a newsletter and would form the foundation for a contract to be awarded the editor. I urge you to maintain the current status of the newsletter, which has served the citizens well as an informative and impartial source of news and community information.

Thank you in advance, Sarah J. Starrett, Tennyson Road



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

thoughts on the newsletter

Anne Headley <asheadley@verizon.net>

Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 3:07 PM

To: Ward5@upmd.org, Ward3@upmd.org, Thompson@upmd.org

Cc: ward2@upmd.org

Dear Ms. Sorensen and committee members,

I am convinced that the newsletter should remain an independent entity rather than giving all the control to this or any other mayor.

There are many areas of town government that need more transparency, and this should be an obvious place to start.

Thank you for listening.

Anne Headley (ward 2)

Anne Headley

asheadley@verizon.net

Blog: www.anneheadley.wordpress.com

Now available on amazon.com for the kindle:

Reflections on Resumes: Taking a Second Look



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Support your proposal

Laura Donnelly <laura.donnelly@jhu.edu>
To: "ward5@upmd.org" <ward5@upmd.org>

Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 2:30 PM

Dear Heidi: our family supports your proposal for clarifying the Town Newsletter's oversight. We do not want to see the Town Charter violated nor control of the newsletter devolve upon one person--the Mayor. I intend to attend the Thursday Rules committee meeting. Let me know if there's anything special I should do to show support. L

Laura Donnelly
(301) 927-6550



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Newsletter

Sue Yarvin <sue.yarvin@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 10:52 PM

To: Ward5@upmd.org

I would like to express my opinion that there should be no changes to our town newsletter. The newsletter is excellent as it is, and we are served well by its current editors. Let's instead focus on more appropriate issues our town government should be concerned with, such as maintaining our neighborhood's environment and safety.

Thanks,

Sue Yarvin

4314 Van Buren

Sorensen, Heidi A.

From: Mayor <mayor@upmd.org>
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2014 2:40 PM
Subject: RE: [Spam] Fwd: {Univ. Park List} for submission to the UP town listserve

Marcia—

Thank you for writing me directly. Contrary to what erroneous reports may have circulated, I am making no effort to remove Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart as editors of the newsletter. Nor have I made any changes to the newsletter other than some minor tweaking of the Town's contact information, an approach to make the Mayor's column more interactive, and a suggestion that authorship of material submitted as part of Town News be attributed.

The problem is that--contrary both to best practice and Maryland law--the editors have no written contract with the Town laying out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town. My approach—also the expressed desire of the Council, as I understand it--is to correct that by getting the editors under a proper contract. Because of what the Town pays for editing and producing the newsletter (not including printing), Town policy and best practice both require that the contracting be put out to bid via a Request for Proposals. That is something which the Mayor, per the Town Charter, is charged to do following our standard bid procedures ... though the Council if it chooses can override those procedures. Accordingly, I have drafted a "Scope of Work" describing the newsletter as it is, and have asked the Council to suggest revisions or additions. That is what is going on now. The Council referred it to the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which will meet on Thursday evening to discuss this, and will provide its recommendations to me by the end of September.

I met with Todd and Bridget nearly two weeks ago to discuss all of these topics, and approached our conversation with an assumption that they were the incumbent editors and that we were working together to get the newsletter out each month.

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor
Town of University Park

6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, Maryland
Office: (301) 927-4262

From: Marcia Schieck [mailto:mlschieck@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2014 12:50 PM
To: Ward 1; Ward 2; Ward 3; Ward 4; Ward 5; Ward 6; Ward 7; Mayor
Subject: [Spam] Fwd: {Univ. Park List} for submission to the UP town listserve
Importance: Low

Mayor and Council members.

It has been reported that the Mayor would like to remove the Warrens from their position writing the Town newsletter.

I would be interested if you could articulate the issues identified in making a determination to support removal of the Warren's from this responsibility.

Many thanks. Marcia Schieck Pineway



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

[Spam] Fwd: {Univ. Park List} for submission to the UP town listserve

Marcia Schieck <mlschieck@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 12:50 PM

To: Ward1@upmd.org, Ward2@upmd.org, Ward3@upmd.org, Ward4@upmd.org, Ward5@upmd.org, Ward6@upmd.org, Ward7@upmd.org, Mayor@upmd.org

Mayor and Council members.

It has been reported that the Mayor would like to remove the Warrens from their position writing the Town newsletter.

I would be interested if you could articulate the issues identified in making a determination to support removal of the Warren's from this responsibility.

Many thanks. Marcia Schieck Pineway



Heidi Sorensen <heidl.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Newsletter control

jayson amster <j.amsterlaw@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 12:39 PM

To: "ward5@upmd.org" <Ward5@upmd.org>

This is to inform you that I oppose putting editorial control of the Town newsletter in the hands of the mayor. It's a bad idea in that it reduces the source of information to residents for the relative few who pay attention. jayson amster

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The information contained in this electronic message and any attached documents is privileged, confidential, and protected from disclosure. It may be an attorney-client communication and, as such, is privileged and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, note that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of the contents of this electronic message or any attached documents is prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please destroy it and notify us immediately by telephone (301/627-5400) or by electronic mail (j.amsterlaw@gmail.com). Thank you.

Sorensen, Heidi A.

From: Mayor <mayor@upmd.org> on behalf of Mayor
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2014 2:55 PM
Subject: re: Town newsletter

Loretta—

Thank you cc'ing me; I forwarded your message to my official mail-box, so will respond from there.

Contrary to what erroneous reports may have circulated, I am making no effort to remove Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart as editors of the newsletter. Nor have I made any changes to the newsletter other than some minor tweaking of the Town's contact information to make it more clear, an approach to invite responses to me re: the Mayor's column, and a suggestion that authorship of material submitted as part of Town News be attributed.

The problem is that--contrary both to best practice and Maryland law--the editors have no written contract with the Town laying out the mutual responsibilities of editors and Town. My approach--also the expressed desire of the Council, as I understand it--is to correct that by getting the editors under a proper contract. Because of what the Town pays for editing and producing the newsletter (not including printing), Town policy and best practice both require that the contracting be put out to bid via a Request for Proposals. That is something which the Mayor, per the Town Charter, is charged to do following our standard bid procedures ... though the Council if it chooses can override those procedures. Accordingly, I have drafted a "Scope of Work" describing the newsletter as it is, and have asked the Council to suggest revisions or additions. That is what is going on now. The Council referred it to the Council Committee on Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure, which will meet on Thursday evening to discuss this, and will provide its recommendations to me by the end of September.

I met with Todd and Bridget nearly two weeks ago to discuss all of these topics, and approached our conversation with an assumption that they were the incumbent editors and that we were working together to get the newsletter out each month.

With best regards,

Len Carey

Lenford C. Carey, Mayor
Town of University Park
6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, Maryland
Office: (301) 927-4262

Begin forwarded message:

From: Loretta Vitale Saks <lvitalesaks@gmail.com>

Date: August 4, 2014 at 12:13:20 PM EDT

To: Ward5@upmd.org

Cc: Len Carey <lencarey@verizon.net>

Subject: Town newsletter

Hi Heidi,

I've just read Vic and Maureen Stone's email about the Mayor's intent to contract out the town newsletter. How fortunate we are to have town residents interested in writing/publishing the excellent, informative newsletter we have enjoyed for several decades. I am AGAINST any change in the newsletter -- no need to fix what isn't broken and is, in fact, working extremely well.

Loretta Vitale Saks
4307 Claggett Rd.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Town newsletter

Loretta Vitale Saks <lvitalesaks@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 12:13 PM

To: Ward5@upmd.org

Cc: Len Carey <lencarey@verizon.net>

Hi Heidi,

I've just read Vic and Maureen Stone's email about the Mayor's intent to contract out the town newsletter. How fortunate we are to have town residents interested in writing/publishing the excellent, informative newsletter we have enjoyed for several decades. I am AGAINST any change in the newsletter -- no need to fix what isn't broken and is, in fact, working extremely well.

Loretta Vitale Saks
4307 Clagett Rd.



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

changes to newsletter

bsglover3@verizon.net <bsglover3@verizon.net>
To: heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com

Sun, Aug 3, 2014 at 6:01 PM

Heidi:

Arlene gave me a copy of the proposed changes to the University Park Newsletter. I am very opposed to the stated changes especially the role of the mayor to review the copy of the Newsletter. I do not believe that the mayor should become a pseudo editor of the paper....sounds like a form of censorship. I would be very concerned if President Obama had such a role with the Washington Post. Over the years I have enjoyed and very much appreciated the Newsletter. It is the only way I can receive news of the University Park community and what is going on there. I want the meetings of the town Council reported as objectively as possible. I think Todd Stewart and Bridget Warren are excellent editors and see no reason for these dramatic changes. Please help us avoid these changes. thanks

Barbara Glover 7006 Forest Hill Dr... ward 7



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

Re: Town Newsletter

1 message

Brad Hess <bradleeheess@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 3, 2014 at 11:34 AM

To: Laura Donnelly <laura.donnelly@jhu.edu>

Cc: "ward3@upmd.org" <ward3@upmd.org>, Ward 5 <ward5@upmd.org>

Thanks Laura. There is a rules committee meeting this Thursday at 7 at town hall. Please come if you can.

Brad

Brad Hess

6715 Queens Chapel Road

University Park, Maryland USA 20782

301-699-0694 (home)

202-531-5347 (mobile)

On Sat, Aug 2, 2014 at 9:50 PM, Laura Donnelly <laura.donnelly@jhu.edu> wrote:

Dear Brad: we met you at Dannielle Glaros' fundraiser that Sunday it snowed this spring! As very long time (1975) and extremely well-informed residents of UP, we are appalled that the new Mayor is attempting to control the news distributed to the Town. I read the initial information about this subject and thought that common sense would prevail. It seems not. We have just asked Heidi Sorenson for copies of all recent pertinent documents and want to express our concern that the responsibility for publishing and editing town news will devolve entirely on one person--someone we actually voted against based on our personal knowledge of how he handled himself at many prior council meetings. Please count us among those who support Councilperson Sorenson's committee's work on this issue and think that the Town Council should restate and enforce the town charter which assigns the responsibility of publishing and editing the town news to the Town Council. Thanks for listening to some of your concerned constituents.

Laura and Michael Donnelly

4421 Underwood St, Ward 3

(301) 927-6550



Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

FYI**Arlene Christiansen** <arlenechristiansen@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 2, 2014 at 7:51 PM

To: Brad Hess <bradleeheess@gmail.com>, Joe Thompson <upmdward1@gmail.com>, James Gekas <jcg20782@yahoo.com>, Heidi Sorensen <heidi.a.sorensen@gmail.com>

I hate to admit that I had not been aware of places where the charter awards a lot more power and duty to the Council than I had realized. Here are a few examples in case you have not noticed, that I would like my representatives to know given past frustration with council members who were inclined to bow to the power of the mayor.

Article IV, Section 401 states the Powers and Duties of Mayor. In (b) Appointments it states "All subordinate officers and employees of the offices, departments, and agencies of the town government shall be appointed and removed by the Mayor **in accordance with the rules and regulations which may be adopted by the Common Council.**"

i hope you will keep that in mind as you review and eventually approve a personnel manual and job descriptions. I remain concerned that a position of Assistant Town Clerk is described and to my knowledge the council never approved having such a position.

Also (f) Other: "The Mayor shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this Charter or as required by the Common Council through Ordinance or otherwise, but not inconsistent with this Charter."

Under Section 402, the Powers and Duties of Council are stated. b. (1iii) states Town Newsletter. "**To publish and distribute a Town newsletter to provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town**, to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance, provided, however, that publication of such notices in the Town newsletter shall not be considered a substitute for any requirement for advertisement, in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town or the posting of notice in a public place."

Also b (xvi) Departments: "To create, change, and abolish offices, departments, or agencies other than the offices, departments, and agencies established by this Charter; to assign additional functions or duties to offices, department, or agencies established by this Charter, but not including the power to discontinue or assign to any other office, department or agency any function or duty assigned by this Charter to a particular office, department , or agency.

I would urge the council to take more control of the Town newsletter. The newsletter should clearly state on the cover page that it is published and distributed by the Town Council even if the staff at Town Hall have been asked to handle payment to the editor and the printer.

Also I request that going forward you follow the charter to publish notice of ordinances in the Gazette which is delivered, though without subscription, to every address in town for free. Virtually no one in town reads the paper in which the town publishes notice of ordinance or property tax increases and there have been times when the notice has failed to be sent to the newsletter editor for inclusion in the Town newsletter.

So very much appreciate your service to the Town.
Arlene

PS: My husband John seconds the above.

APPENDIX E

Draft Resolution on the Town Newsletter

WHEREAS, Section 402(b)(1iii) of the Charter Of The Town Of University Park, Prince George's County, Maryland, sets forth that the Town Newsletter is to “provide information to the citizens of the Town relating to governmental activities of the Town, [and] to provide official notices as required by Charter or Ordinance”;

WHEREAS, the selection of the current co-editors for the Newsletter was not arrived at through a competitive bidding process;

WHEREAS, the Town’s annual expenditure on the Newsletter exceeds the threshold for Maryland state best practices related to sole source procurements;

WHEREAS, there is currently no written and agreed upon scope of work, editorial guidelines, or contract between the Town and the Newsletter co-editors; and

WHEREAS, recent public meetings about the Newsletter indicate that most interested residents want to maintain the local character the publication as a Newsletter and not as an organ of argumentation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and the Common Council (“Council”) of the Town of University Park, Maryland that the following is adopted:

1. The Mayor and the Council will work together with Town Counsel to develop any ordinance, additional legislative resolution, request for proposals, and scope of work or other documents as may be necessary to effectuate the recommendations agreed upon by the Council through this resolution.
2. The Mayor will develop a request for proposals (“RFP”) for a competitive bid for the newsletter editor that conforms to Section 618(b) of the Charter Of The Town Of University Park Prince George's County, Maryland, Maryland state best practices, and that conforms with the requirements of the scope of work attached to this resolution. The Mayor will evaluate the proposals received and bring his recommended option and at least two other options (if at least three proposals are submitted) to the Council for discussion and approval.
3. The Mayor will develop an RFP for a competitive bid for the printing and distribution of the newsletter that conforms to Maryland state best practices and that is guided by the experience and input of the current Newsletter co-editors. The same process used to select the Newsletter editor shall be used to select the contractor for printing and distribution of the Newsletter.

4. The Council establishes a Newsletter Review Board (“the Board”) to include the Mayor, a Council Member, and a town resident as described and selected in the attached scope of work. The scope of the Board’s review is limited to determining whether the content complies with the Town’s published newsletter editorial guidelines (“Editorial Guidelines”). The Board encourages the editor and author or content sources to resolve expeditiously and amicably any differences with regard to conformance with the Editorial Guidelines.

5. The Council establishes the following Editorial Guidelines for the Town Newsletter:
 - a. All content in the Newsletter, including content received from Town employees or elected officials must be attributed.

 - b. Content must not be argumentative.

 - c. An author or source of content must not represent the views or opinions of others.

 - d. No paid advertising or advertising for a commercial, for-profit, religious, or political purpose is allowed.

 - e. No regular or recurring article or column may be added to the Newsletter without permission from the Town.

ADOPTED by the Mayor and the Common Council of the Town of University Park, Maryland on _____, 2014.

EFFECTIVE on _____, 2014.