

Erica Henderson

From: Dan Wietecha
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 10:05 AM
To: PublicComment
Subject: FW: Zoom, public notices & public access

Appears by Ms. Siebenaler's closing sentence that she wants her email to be included in public comments to City Council.

Dan Wietecha

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Communication
Optimal Service
Respect for Resources
Enthusiasm

From: Lisa Siebenaler
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 9:50 AM
To: John Hinzman, AICP ; Dan Wietecha
Cc: Lisa Leifeld
Subject: Zoom, public notices & public access

Hello Lisa, John & Dan,

As you may have noticed last night I wasn't able to join the zoom meeting via telephone until after it started. I called in about 10 & 15 minutes early & was told the meeting hadn't started so I called back approximately 7 minutes prior & zoom asked if I wanted to wait until zoom was able to connect me or call back. So I waited and it did not auto connect me until approximately 3-5 minutes after the meeting started. FYI

This may have caused me to miss instructions at the beginning but , can you start every meeting by notifying the public and when advertising meeting instructions & on the website , notify the public so when using the telephone option for zoom, citizens can speak & mute their speech by pressing *6 please? Obviously you can't see their hand raise if their video isn't connected.

I also believe the city has an obligation to provide free access to all public governmental meetings. In these economic times upon us, when a family is trying to keep a roof over their heads and food in their mouths, cell phones, computers and Internet are likely the next largest expenses & many will have to go without. I'm sure we're seeing this with schools too. Before the pandemic and certainly now and the continued future. Regularly I see people sitting outside the public library. It appears they're using Internet because they don't have any connection otherwise. This also significantly impacts citizens ability to apply for jobs, apply for unemployment, apply for food assistance , the list goes on and on. We have no public transportation for people to get to assistance before or now to do things even in person. Virtually all services of the CARES act are inaccessible too many and that number will only continue to grow. Quite frankly I believe Internet access is a human right in this day and age. Maybe the city can subsidize a nonprofit or bring Community education services in to the picture to coordinate assisting citizens in this need. I believe this is certainly worth brainstorming and thinking about until a solution becomes viable.

Can the city explore providing internet access through tax dollars, like Minneapolis has been doing for years, for all residents? Keeping in mind, The connection is one thing and having a device to connect to and the knowledge how to use it is another. We have a large aging population that will continue to grow adding to those numbers. This is never going away. Comcast has \$10 access for low income (& device cost assistance also) & maybe other resources are available but people need help identifying & accessing these services.

As I mentioned last night in the meeting I'm hopeful City Council will seriously consider trying to reach more than a couple thousand people in town with public notices. Clearly the rules surrounding public notices are archaic in that printed newspaper is a thing of the past. And has been for more than 15 years. As you may or may not know the current distribution of the Star Gazette which is voted to be used for this purpose has approximately 2500 people reach in 55033, when I checked last summer which likely has only gone down in subscribers since. This figure also included newsstand papers whether or not they were purchased or purchased by 55033 residents or not. I do not believe this adequately serves the citizens of Hastings. Being Hastings is a Saint Paul suburb & Saint Paul Pioneer press having the greatest distribution in the southeast metro, how many current subscribers are in 55033? Currently subscriptions are \$156/7days & \$110/thursday & Sunday, a year.

Has the option of mailing a news letter & setting out flyers around the community in frequently used businesses & public spaces for public notification purposes? Better yet partner with the KDWA publication. They could re-design to a fold over design to accommodate City notices. Likely these options are more cost effective than cost to publish in large Metropolitan newspapers. Support local businesses & services is always best!!

Also, Like I mentioned in the meeting last night I have information from other cities showing how they 'are' providing public access for free, as a result of the stay at home order put in place, for public governmental meetings. Has anyone asked around to other cities and how they are doing this to provide this 'essential free access' connection for all citizens?

I appreciate you including my email in the upcoming city Council meeting . I will try to join the meeting via zoom.

I very much appreciate your hard work! Everyone of you. Thank you

Warm Regards,
Lisa Siebenaler
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