



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Information & Technology Services

Minutes Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee

Bloomington City Hall, 401 N. Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana
McCloskey Conference Room and on Zoom
Thursday, April 3rd, 2025

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER [4:07 pm]

Facilitated by Rick Dietz

ROLL CALL:

Board Members present: Chris Robb, Andy Koop, Michelle Cole, Mike Trotzke, and Mike Allen

Board Members present via Zoom: Marianne Chitwood

Board absent:

City staff, officials, and guests present: Rick Dietz, and Victoria Jones

No motions, no votes, no official action was taken.

Staff reported to Committee Members on a variety of topics related to fiber projects, digital equity, and information technology.

Administrative Updates

- Rick Dietz welcomes board members to attend tonight's State of the City address at the John Waldron Arts Center, a new location this year. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the event begins at 6:00 p.m.
- Rick shared his excitement about hosting tonight's meeting with the reappointed members and all in attendance.

Information & Technology Services (ITS) Department Updates

- Rick: ITS is close to completing the camera and cabling work for the Hopewell Development and Seminary Park.
- Rick: We are in the early stages of development planning for the Building Trades Park design process, including WiFi and security assets.
- Rick: The City Fiber core loop is expanding to connect additional City infrastructure, including the Public Safety Training Center, the Animal Shelter, Sanitation, and the broader Winston Thomas area. The Animal Shelter area will include a public WiFi service hotspot. This fiber expansion is part of this year's overall Digital Equity Strategic Plan.
- Rick: The Indiana University Data Center virtual infrastructure is operational with existing hardware. The equipment will be upgraded this year. The plan is to have the live failover for Police, Fire, and Dispatch systems at the Dispatch Center.

- Robb: What is the status of the park's projects? Dietz: We plan to have the Seminary Park agreement fully executed next week. Shortly after, the vendor will complete the work, and there will be power. Once it is finished, there will be a city press release. Jones: The Hopewell and Seminary Park agreements will be completed next week.

New Agenda Items

- Rick: The Federal NTIA Digital Equity Grant is on hold. Dietz and Jonas Chang, the City's grant specialist with the Office of the Controller, have provided the National Telecommunications and Information Administration all the requested follow-up information, and set up the special accounts required by the grant.
- Rick: The City has an accepted offer for the Digital Equity Specialist position. She will begin in May and will manage the Federal grant and the Digital Equity Community Survey and Strategic Plan. This work will build on the 2020 plan and provide updated longitudinal data. The City has accomplished many of the action items in the plan, but we look forward to having new action items for the city and community.
- Rick: The Digital Equity Specialist will also manage the city-funded Digital Equity grants. This year, the budget increased by \$5,000 to \$55,000, which will be distributed in 2025. This year, we are also shifting our application platform to Civiform, part of the Google(dot)org initiative.
- Rick: A discussion took place to gather committee feedback about updating the city's terminology for grants and other opportunities, from the use of '*Digital Equity*' and '*Digital Inclusion*' to wording that includes the city's institutional values.
 - Chris Robb expressed that this is the reality, especially at the federal level.
 - Andy Koop stated they have had similar conversations about renaming things.
 - Mike Trotzke agrees with the need to change things.
 - Michelle Cole mentioned knowing of federal staff who attended Digital Equity and Inclusion trainings and were fired. She recommended removing that terminology.
 - Mike Allen recommended using the terminology that meets the need.

Rick: These terms describe what we do, but we haven't made any changes yet. IF we receive guidance from National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and NTIA about terminology, we will consider it then. Rick expressed his appreciation for the committee's feedback.

City-Wide Fiber Broadband Initiative

- Rick: The fiber project is in a construction pause. We now know that AEG, which started as Young Communications and became TrueLine, is no longer operating and is off the project. Hoosier Fiber Networks' (HFN) current approach is to perform cleanup and remediation of issues that were left unfinished. We anticipate that HFN will have a new permitted subcontractor in the next week or two to clean up the current site work and address existing resident issues during the construction pause over the next few months. In the meantime, HFN will be working to secure a new project-wide construction partner, possibly with one of their subcontractors currently working for HFN elsewhere. We will be involved in those discussions but will not determine the outcome. An additional factor of the performance bond for permitting, and we are looking to access those resources. Additionally, HFN is working with its bond surety to access the funds related to AEG's obligation. This allows us to identify issues before moving forward with new construction work. However, this will likely extend the completion date past the end of this year into next year.
- Mike Trotzke asked about the construction company's financial stability and the need to continue more costly underground work. Rick agreed that this has been a more

expensive build than planned due to not having access to Duke poles for less expensive aerial work, but this Bloomington project was not the determining factor in AEG/TrueLine's bankruptcy. AEG had several ongoing projects. An investment firm, Grain Management, owns AEG. We are making every effort to get the project back on track and address challenges over the last few months.

- Rick opened the floor for questions. The group discussed the RDC and Comcast agreement. Rick mentioned that the RDC owns the property being discussed, and therefore, their board had to approve Comcast's access to make improvements to it.

MEMBER REPORTS (Items not on the agenda)

- Mike Trotzke mentioned that the Mill Executive Director position closes in a few minutes. They have several good prospects. Michelle Cole added that they have ten applications.
- Chris Robb stated that their new Bloomington office move was delayed again, and they are looking at a tentative move-in date of the 15th.
- Andy Koop is looking at ways to save money.

ADJOURNMENT [4:49 pm]

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Minutes prepared by: Victoria Jones