City of Bloomington: Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee

Date of Record: July 1, 2004

Summary:

Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee meeting held on Thursday, July 1, 2004 at 4:00 pm in the McCloskey Conference Room of City Hall at Showers, 401 N. Morton St., Bloomington, Indiana.

Roll Call
Committee Members Present:
> Rick Dietz, Indiana University
> Mark McMath, Bloomington Hospital
> Bruce Myers, Kiva
> Brian Voss, Indiana University
> Charlie Webb, CallNet
> Linda Williamson, Bloomington Economic Development Corporation

Committee Members Absent:
> Dennis Morrison, Center for Behavioral Health

Guests Present:
> Brett Skilbred, InfoComm Systems, Inc.

Staff Present:
> Gregory Volan, CIO, City of Bloomington
> Rick Routon, User Support and Network Operations Manager, ITS, City of Bloomington

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm

I. Administrative Business
   a. Minutes from June 3, 2004 were reviewed and approved.
   b. Mark McMath explained that since the June meeting, Bloomington Hospital has had further negotiations with telecom providers, and he believes the hospital is close to signing a deal with one of them to get high-speed bandwidth over fiber. Mark did not believe he needed to amend the June minutes, but wanted to the committee to know about this recent development.

II. New Business: Strategic Plan Proposal from InfoComm
   a. Greg Volan suggested that the Committee change its course somewhat. In past several meetings, the Committee has planned on organizing a Telecom Town Hall to ask questions to and get information from telecom providers. Greg said that he and staff had rethought this position over the last month and recommended instead that the Committee meet with potential users of fiber in the local area to find out about their need for fiber and whether or not that need is being met.
   b. Brett Skilbred circulated a proposal from InfoComm. Brett explained that the purpose of the study was to gather data about the local market for fiber. InfoComm would gather data by meeting with approximate 20 entities that are likely to need fiber, and by sending surveys to approximately 100 other companies. Once the data

is collected, InfoComm would analyze it and make recommendations that would form basis for a telecommunications strategy.

c. Mark McMath asked whether City and County would be part of this analysis. It was generally thought that some of the constituents we are interested in are in the county, outside of the Bloomington city limits.

d. Mark McMath asked whether InfoComm could supply examples of the kinds of analyses they have performed for other communities.

e. Bruce Myers wanted to know why we would not want to include the telecom providers as part of the analysis. Why not also have the Telecom Town Hall?

   i. Brett Skilbred explained that meeting with the telecom providers was not part of the proposal as currently drafted. The proposal focused on meeting with the constituents, but it can be changed to include meeting with providers. Or the Telecom Town Hall can take place at the same time that InfoComm is meeting with the constituents.

   ii. Bruce Myers stated that there were assumptions in the proposal that telecom providers were not interested in the BDU infrastructure, and Bruce argued that there we did not have enough information to reach that conclusion. We have only talked with two providers: Smithville Digital and Fastwire. Before we draw conclusions about what providers are or are not interested in, we need to ask them.

   iii. Brett explained that it is often difficult to meet with providers and get them to explain what their goals and plans are.

f. Bruce Myers stated that, as he read the BDU policies, the City deals with telecom providers and not directly with end users. It seems to him that the committee is jumping ahead by talking directly with the constituents (the end users) without first talking with the providers.

   i. Greg Volan explained that if we get the constituents together and find out what they want, we might discover that they can achieve their goals by working together in ways that would have been possible alone. He noted that the hospital did something similar by inviting the City and some other groups to participate in meetings that the hospital had set up with telecom providers.

g. Greg Volan also mentioned that I-Light 2, the State's initiative to build a fiber network connecting about a dozen or so cities around Indiana, but the fiber will terminate at a central point in each city. The I-Light 2 project will rely on local initiatives to get the key institutions in each city to connect to that central point.

   i. Brian Voss explained that I-Light 2 only deals with educational institutions. It's a replacement of a portion of IHETS's network. He has heard that Senator Ford would like to broaden the scope of I-Light 2 to include tech parks. Brian believes that ultimately there will be a higher education/government piece and a separate municipal governmental piece that has a broader economic development mission.

   ii. Greg Volan pointed out that I-Light 2 was designed so that the meeting point in each city was located in the downtown area, not on a university campus, so that the hub can be used by non-educational institutions also.

   iii. Greg Volan also explained that institutions like Ivy Tech will eventually be looking for a way to connect into the I-Light 2 fiber, which will hopefully terminate in Bloomington at the telecom hotel at 7th & Walnut. Ivy Tech's goal

> to get connected to the telecom hotel might create opportunities to work with businesses on the west side of Bloomington who might also be interested in fiber connections.

  iv. Brian Voss agreed, and explained that the hidden benefit of the I-Light 2 initiative is the educational use serves as an anchor tenant for fiber infrastructure and you can "build a mall around it."

 h. Brian Voss stated that he thought the study covered in InfoComm's proposal was very much needed, but that we should also meet with the telecommunication providers and learn more about what was happening at the state level.

 i. Rick Dietz asked about whether the City was planning on requiring the installation of conduit during road construction projects, whether done by the City or by private developers. Greg Volan explained that he had talked to Justin Wykoff, head of the Engineering department, who said that they cannot require a private developer to put in conduit in a privately-built road, even if that road will eventually be handed over to the City.

  i. Rick pointed out that the ordinance could be changed. He suggested that the City should be able to decide during the building of any new road whether conduit should be placed underneath. If the City decides that conduit is needed, the develops should be required to install it.

  ii. Several members thought that this issue should be part of InfoComm's study.

 j. No action was taken on InfoComm's proposal. Brett Skilbred agreed that he would prepare a revised proposal that would expand the scope of analysis to include getting input from the telecommunications providers. The revised proposal would be considered at the next meeting.

III. New Business: Use of fiber by Center for Behavioral Health

 a. Greg Volan explained that the Center for Behavioral Health would like to use two strands of fiber to connect to the jail (through the telecom hotel) so that they can provide mental health services to jail inmates through videoconferencing. They would use the fiber at no cost. Under the policies, pricing decisions require Council approval, and Greg thought that the decision to allow the use of fiber at no cost would also be a pricing decision requiring Council approval. Greg wanted to have recommendation from this Committee before going to Council

 b. Greg Volan explained that the Center would be responsible for connecting to the fiber.

 c. Greg Volan also explained that CBH would lease fiber from City. MCCSC currently uses two strands of the City's fiber which is understood to be a lease agreement, but there is no actual written agreement between the City and MCCSC.

 d. Several committee members were interested to know why the CBH wanted fiber, since video conferencing applications can be run over DSL circuits. Brian Voss thought that fiber would be overkill for video conferencing, but he would support allowing the CBH to use the fiber.

  i. Brian Voss mentioned, as an aside, that Insight will soon join the IU peering point.

 e. Charlie Webb was concerned about the possibility of running out of fiber. What happens when we run out?

      i. Greg Volan mentioned that the fiber has been sitting unused for several years. We want people to use it. Also, there is other conduit in the ground in which new fiber can be installed.

     ii. Brian Voss suggested that we make the lease with the CBH a short term lease in case we run out of capacity in the future.

f. Bruce Myers raised a concern about letting them use it for free. Could that set a bad precedent?

      i. Greg Volan suggested that the distinction here is that the CBH is a non-profit organization.

     ii. Brian Voss suggested that the important fact is that this would be a short-term lease. If they want a longer term, the CBH has to pay. "Short-term" would mean three years.

    iii. Bruce Myers thought we should make some pricing decisions before letting entities use it for free.

    iv. Brian Voss suggested that the CBH wants to use the fiber for a governmental use – to provide mental health services to jail inmates.

     v. Bruce Myers asked whether the policies say that rates must be at or near market value. Greg Volan responded that the market price is one factor to be considered.

    vi. Brian argued that the real distinction in this case is that the CBH wants to use the fiber for a governmental use, not that the CBH is a non-profit organization.

g. Several members agreed that the CBH's use of the fiber should be limited to the governmental use. The CBH would have to pay if they want to the fiber for any other use, such as getting Internet connectivity.

      i. Rick Dietz cautioned against setting a general precedent based on one example. However, he would support limiting the CBH's use of the fiber to the governmental use.

h. Mark McMath wants to know whether the CBH really needs the fiber for the video conferencing application.

      i. Rick Dietz also wanted to know this also.

i. The committee voted unanimously to recommend that the City allow the Center for Behavioral Health be allowed to use two strands of the City's fiber at no charge, with the understanding that (1) the use of the fiber be limited to connecting to the County, (2) the term be limited to three years, and (3) that the CBH be responsible for the costs of the building entrance.

IV. New Business: Use of fiber by HoosierNet

a. Rick Dietz suggested that we should have a broader discussion about the use of fiber by non-profit groups.

b. Greg Volan explained that HoosierNet wants to use the BDU fiber. He circulated a letter from David Ernst of HoosierNet.

c. Greg Volan explained that the City has an interest to use fiber to connect to HoosierNet because the City gets our Internet bandwidth from HoosierNet, and we can replace an SBC T-1 circuit.

      i. Brian Voss contended that this is actually a government use. This is the City using the fiber for its own use.

        ii. Greg Volan agreed and explained that he thought that this use of the fiber would not need to be approved by City Council. There appeared to be a general agreement on this point.

   d. Greg Volan explained that HoosierNet also wants to connect to the Telecom Hotel for its own use, to connect to the commodity Internet.

   e. There seemed to be a consensus that HoosierNet would have to pay something to use the City's fiber in this way, which raised the issue that the City has not set prices yet for the use of fiber.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm

Minutes submitted by Gregory Volan, August 5, 2004.