City of Bloomington: Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee

Date of Record: April 7, 2005

Prepared By: Matt Nagle, ITS/SPEA Intern
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Summary

Bloomington Underground Advisory Committee (hereafter "Committee") meeting held Thursday April 7, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. in the McCloskey Room of City Hall at Showers, 401 N. Morton St., Bloomington, IN.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present
        Mark McMath, Bloomington, Bloomington Hospital
        Bruce Myers, Kiva
        Charlie Webb, CallNet
        Eric Ost, TCC

Committee Members Absent
        Brian Kleber, Small Business Development
        Linda Williamson, Bloomington Economic Development Corporation

One Vacancy

City of Bloomington Staff Present
        Rick Dietz, Director Bloomington ITS
        Rick Routon, Assistant Director Bloomington ITS

Guests Present
        David Ernst, HoosierNet
        Brett Skilbred, InfoComm Systems
        Bob Phelps – Smithville Digital
        John Conley – Smithville Digital
        Matt Pierce – State Legislature

Handouts

1. April 7, 2005 Meeting Agenda
2. February 3, 2005 Minutes
3. BDU Policies Memo [David Ernst – HoosierNet]
4. Snippet from July 2004 BDU Minutes (discussing HoosierNet request)
5. Draft Strategic Plan - InfoComm

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m.

I.   Review of February Minutes
    a.   Rick Dietz stated that Bill Haden was a guest for the meeting and spoke about connectivity around the Bryan Park area (correction needed in minutes).
    b.   Meeting minutes approved

II. Update from Brett Skilbred of InfoComm on Strategic Plan Progress
    a.   Brett Skilbred stated that he wanted to review the key points for the Strategic Plan, specifically the "Vision" and "Direction" sections.
        i.   Vision
            1.   Bret Skilbred identified three primary parts to the vision -- "Current State", "Desired State", and "GAP Analysis".
                a.   Within the "Desired State", Bret Skilbred stated that some information from the surveys have been protected from public knowledge (i.e. associating opinions with sources).
        ii. Strategic Direction
            1.   Bret Skilbred stated the Strategic Direction would incorporate information from the survey and would include information gathered about initiatives.
    b.   Bret Skilbred stated that he wanted to start an email conversation about the Strategic Plan in the coming weeks to get critical input as the plan progresses.
    c.   Bret Skilbred reviewed the "Current State" of the plan, noting information about the functions and definitions of the BDU project/committee, mapping connections, describing the Telecom Hotel, funding sources, other telecommunications structure.
        i.   Bret Skilbred stated that he had trouble getting mapping information from Cynergy; consequently, the "Current State" section of the Strategic Plan omits Cynergy from its analysis.
        ii. Bret Skilbred discussed cable infrastructure installed by Insight Communications as well as Kiva infrastructure and a dark fiber network owned by U.S. Signal. U.S. Signal operates mainly in northern Indiana and southern Michigan; consequently, U.S. Signal wants to sell this infrastructure (the only "dark" fiber in Bloomington) because it does not connect with its other holdings. Other fiber networks in the Bloomington area include Smithville, SBC, and Cynergy holdings.
            1.   Bret Skilbred noted Smithville's "Bloomington Digital Gateway Map" and SBC's "Project LightSpeed".
            2.   Other similar initiatives include Fort Wayne, IN and Verizon's pilot project.
    d.   Bret Skilbred reviewed the "Desired State" section of the Strategic Plan.
        i.   Bret Skilbred stated that the focus group interviews were broken down into three sections – "Market Group Analysis", "Proposed City/County Initiatives", and "General Opinions on BDU Direction".
            1.   Market Group Analysis
                a.   Bret Skilbred noted two types of customers in Bloomington. The first type includes those that view these networks as "buzzwords" and who primarily want cost-reductions from this project. The second type of customer view the project as an economic development initiative necessary for growth in the business community (i.e. Hospital, Baxter, and Cook). From a small business perspective, most did not express an immediate need for these services.
                b.   Bret Skilbred noted that social services programs looked for a "value added" benefit in providing services to the community.
                c.   From the infrastructure provider perspective, most respondents did not express an immediate need to work with BDU because of redundancy in the infrastructure.

        ii. Bret Skilbred stated that the mission statement should serve to move the project forward and that the BDU Committee should really concentrate on this statement for providing solid direction.

      iii. Eric Ost added that anyone who wanted to review previous discussions on goals, benefits from the project, and the mission of the Committee/Project could review meeting minutes online.

e. Bret Skilbred reviewed the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis – of note:

        i. Bret Skilbred stated that a notable strength is ITS in-house expertise in the "dark" fiber networks, eliminating the need for managed services from outside.

        ii. Brett Skilbred stated that project financing might be a concern (weakness) for future projects because of the difficulty in securing and tracking funding.

      iii. Bret Skilbred stated that interoperability for emergency management systems was a concern by some of the respondents.

          1. Rick Dietz responded that the current EOC (Emergency Operations Center) resides in the Bloomington Police Department (BPD) with a backup available at Indiana University. Rick Dietz elaborated that the Committee would need a "fallback" in case of catastrophe (however unlikely that may be).

      iv. Eric Ost stated that, for legal reasons, the Strategic Plan should expand the names of referenced entities, (e.g. "Smithville").

          1. Brett Skilbred qualified Smithville into "Digital", "Telephone", and "???".

          2. Brett Skilbred stated significant opportunities existed within the medical community and with Smithville units.

        v. Bret Skilbred provided several notable threats to the Telecom Hotel, including costs associated with being in the "Prime Retail" business district.

      vi. Bret Skilbred also noted that leasing and rental prices at the Telecom Hotel could present a significant disincentive to companies. Especially for those companies operating at a low volume of operations/sales, these costs might be hard to justify.

      vii. Rick Dietz stated that the issue of I-69 and I-45/46 expansion probably should not be considered a threat to the BDU. Charlie Webb stated that if the Committee handled the details properly, the Committee could capitalize on those projects.

f. Bret Skilbred discussed the "Direction" section of the Telecommunications Business Plan, stating that the three strategies of "Governance", "Growth" and "Planning" all orient themselves toward previously defined goals ad the mission of the Committee.

        i. Within the "Direction" strategy, Bret Skilbred noted that, if a partnership develops between the city and the county on these issues, the Committee must prescribe boundaries for asset use and authority.

          1. Mark McMath added that the City of Philadelphia published their telecommunications project (see www.phila.gov/wireless). Philadelphia is using a "cooperative wholesale" model. This model may help the BDU Committee in its relations with county agencies.

        ii. From the "Strategic Direction" perspective, Bret Skilbred stated that he felt that the BDU Committee would benefit from joining the Telecommunications Council. The greatest benefits would come with the Telecommunications Council's standing and interactions with the public. Further, Bret Skilbred stated that the SWOT analysis and information from the surveys suggest that the most appropriate change would be to align with the Telecommunications Council.

g. Within the "Pricing" strategy, Bret Skilbred stated that the Committee must consider both the economic benefits and the public benefits. In the pricing model (pg. 43), Bret Skilbred quantified public benefits by using "percentage equivalencies of capital" so that the price/volume level will adjust the public benefit accordingly.

h. Rick Dietz suggested that Bret Skilbred create an email suggestion format so that the Committee members could give feedback before the next month.

III.   Discussion of Letter from HoosierNet with David Ernst (Executive Director – HoosierNet)

a. David Ernst explained that HoosierNet wanted to work with BDU for HoosierNet upgrades. David Ernst elaborated that many telecom companies see a great potential to work with BDU and he hopes that these relationships can materialize.
b. David Ernst stated that, from the discussion from the Strategic Plan, the BDU direction aligns with HoosierNet's interests.
    i. David Ernst stated that his company was interested in leasing space at the Telecom Hotel and that only policy decisions were holding these agreements from progressing.
    ii. David Ernst stated that he wanted to maintain fiber connections with Sprint (whose office is close to the Telecom Hotel).
c. Mark McMath asked David Ernst if HoosierNet wants end-to-end use. David Ernst replied that he was looking for support after connection so that service disruptions would be handled.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Matt Nagle