City of Bloomington: Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee

Date of Record: September 2, 2004

Summary:

Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee meeting held on Thursday, September 2, 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
> Bruce Myers, Kiva
> Charlie Webb, CallNet
> Linda Williamson, Bloomington Economic Development Corporation

Committee Members Absent:
> Mark McMath, Bloomington Hospital
> Dennis Morrison, Center for Behavioral Health
> Brian Voss, Indiana University

Guests Present:
> None

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 approximately 4:08 pm.

I. Administrative Business
   a. Greg Volan announced that Dennis Morrison has resigned from the Committee.
   b. Minutes from July 1, 2004 and August 5, 2004 were reviewed and approved.

II. Old Business: Strategic Plan Proposal from InfoComm
   a. Charlie Webb stated that he thought the need for the strategic plan was there and that the cost of InfoComm's proposal was reasonable.
   b. Bruce Myers stated that he thought the proposal was well done and complete. Bruce wanted to know more about the specific tasks InfoComm would accomplish to reach their findings and conclusions.
      i. Greg Volan explained that Jim Goldman, in his presentation in August, described five constituencies that they will focus on: residential, educational, government, industrial (which includes business), and social services. One task is to identify who the key constituents are in each of these areas. They will use our knowledge, but they will supplement it with their own investigation. One method they typically use is to hold a "fiber symposium." They will invite entities that they know about to the fiber symposium, but it also gives them an opportunity to find out about organizations that they might not otherwise had been aware of.

c. Linda Williamson stated that she can provide the copy of the 1996 or 1997 telecommunications study that was discussed at the August meeting. She thought , though, the information was likely to be outdated.

d. Linda Williamson asked about Rick Dietz's comment at the end of the August meeting that we should have other entities, such as the County, participate in this study.

    i. Rick Dietz stated that the County, and perhaps even IU, stand to benefit from this analysis, and we should try to get them to participate in this project. If it is not possible for them to contribute to the cost of the project, it would also help for them to direct people to cooperate from a high level.

    ii. Greg Volan stated that it would be difficult to get their financial cooperation at this late stage.

    iii. Several members discussed the fact that the County has installed fiber optic conduit on the west side of Bloomington.

    iv. Linda Williamson thought it would be good to get the County involved, but that we should not hold up the process to get them to pay for a portion of the cost.

e. Greg Volan asked two questions: (1) would this study provide us with information that we don't already know, and (2) is it worth the $41,000 cost?

    i. Greg Volan referred to answers that Brian Voss, who could not attend the meeting, submitted to those questions. Brian stated that the study would have great merit, and that the cost was reasonable.

    ii. Charlie Webb thought that the study would provide the City with more information than we currently have and that would guide us better on what to do with our fiber optic assets. He also was persuaded by Brian Voss's argument that the $41,000 was reasonable amount for the study when you consider that it is a small percentage of the amount spent on the infrastructure.

    iii. Greg Volan pointed out that the City has spent approximately $1.1 million on its fiber optic infrastructure, and has spent approximately $19,000 to $20,000 already in consulting fees to InfoComm. Even if that consulting is factored in, $60,000 in consulting is still a small percentage of the total amount spent on Infrastructure. Charlie Webb also pointed out that the $41,000 quotation has been discounted because of InfoComm's prior work with the City of Bloomington.

f. Rick Dietz asked how familiar InfoComm was with the County infrastructure. Greg Volan responded that they probably know only what we have told them, but that the County would likely be one of the constituents that they would want to talk with during the study.

    i. Greg Volan stated that Jim Goldman, during his August presentation, had explained that part of their work during the study is detective work. They know what our assets are, but they have to dig around and find out what other assets exist in the community. They'll want to find out what assets the County and IU have in the ground. They might also find out that other entities – entities that we're not aware of now -- have existing telecom assets.

g. Rick Dietz commented on the example Brian Voss raised in his e-mail. In that project, the University had a specific goal: blanket wireless coverage of the entire University. Getting outside expertise would help them achieve their goal. The City's

situation is different because we do not have a specific, concrete goal. We're trying to figure out what our goal should be, not how best to achieve our goal. Are we being concrete enough in what we're asking InfoComm to do? Rick stated that we should not expect to receive a concrete plan as a finished product.

    i. Greg Volan responded that Jim Goldman had stated that the finished product should not be an academic piece that sits on a shelf. The measure of success is that we do have a concrete plan, and that we all know what our next steps are. Greg Volan expected that this process would help the City specific more clearly what our desired state is.

h. Bruce Myers asked whether InfoComm would report to us during the process. He wants to make sure that InfoComm does not reach all of their conclusions without giving us feedback to ensure that they're on the right track. We don't want to get to the end of the project, receive the migration plan, and realize that it doesn't meet our expectations. Linda Williamson and Rick Dietz echoed these comments.

i. Bruce Myers stated that we need this study. The advisory committee has had interesting discussions over the months it has met, but he does not feel it has accomplished very much. Getting profession expertise and guidance on the topics we have discussed would help this committee make better decisions.

j. Linda Williamson also pointed out that the City could use the strategic plan document to leverage grant funds. It could be a tremendous resource in this respect.

k. Greg Volan stated that we need to have full support from the City for this project to be successful. This Committee, the Mayor's Office, the Council all have to be enthusiastically supporting this study and interested in its results. If our support is half-hearted, we won't have good participation and the results will not be as good or helpful.

l. Bruce Myers asked whether it would help to get Council's approval. Greg Volan explained that we need Council's approval for the funding.

m. Bruce Myers mentioned that the proposal expired that day. Greg Volan explained that Jim Goldman had agreed to extend the acceptance date of the proposal.

n. Charlie Webb asked whether we should ask InfoComm to modify its proposal to state that we will receive feedback upon completion of each section of the proposed work.

    i. After some discussion, we agreed to ask Jim Goldman for a project timeline that would state what kind of intermediate deliverables the Committee would receive to ensure that the project is on the right track.

o. The Committee agreed that it would go ahead and vote on the proposal now, with the understanding that InfoComm would provide a project timeline, which would be circulated by e-mail for the committee's input.

p. Charlie Webb moved, and Rick Dietz seconded, the following recommendation: That the City engage InfoComm Systems, Inc. to conduct the work outlined in their Strategic Plan Proposal, dated August 2, 2004, and that the City appropriate funds from the Telecom Fund to pay for the costs of the study.

    i. The recommendation passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Gregory Volan, October 7, 2004.