

City of Bloomington: Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee

Date of Record: March 4, 2004

Summary:

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

Roll Call

Committee Members Present:

Rick Dietz, Indiana University
Mark McMath, Bloomington Hospital
Bruce Myers, Kiva
Dennis Morrison, Center for Behavioral Health
Linda Williamson, Bloomington Economic Development Corporation
Charlie Webb, CallNet

Committee Members Absent:

Brian Voss, Indiana University

Staff Present:

Gregory Volan, CIO, City of Bloomington
Rick Routon, User Support and Network Operations Manager, ITS, City of Bloomington
Ron Walker, Director of Economic Development, Mayor's Office, City of Bloomington
Heather Collins, Intern, ITS, City of Bloomington

Meeting was called to order by Greg Volan at 4:05 pm

I. Administrative Business/Role of Advisory Committee

- a. Greg Volan welcomed the committee members and suggested the group designate a chairperson and decide on a regular meeting time.
 - i. The City is facing issues regarding the BDU that need to be resolved in a timely manner. Specifically, there are two businesses in Bloomington who have expressed an interest in purchasing conduit from the City. However, the City has not yet decided on a pricing structure for the fiber.
- b. It was decided that the group would meet twice a month for the next 2-3 months; thereafter, once a month.
- c. Greg Volan offered to invite Jim Goldman from Infocomm/Purdue University to the next BDU meeting, as Infocomm has been working with many cities in Indiana on planning for and managing fiber infrastructure. It would be helpful for the advisory committee to learn about Infocomm's experiences and problems, and to learn what other cities are doing with their fiber.
 - i. The group agreed to invite Jim Goldman to a future meeting.
- d. The group discussed the purpose and goals of the advisory committee:
 - i. Greg Volan said that the group's initial purpose will be to make recommendations to the City Council on a fiber pricing scheme, related contracts, and the overall ownership structure. That is, should the City sell the fiber, lease it, or designate another entity to manage it?

- ii. Charlie Webb raised the question: which path should the group take—deciding on a pricing structure then the ownership structure, or vice-versa?
- iii. Bruce Myers asked if there are parties interested in potential ownership. Greg Volan indicated there may be some, but at present it is still too early to tell.
- iv. Linda Williamson noted that if the City decides it wants to sell the fiber, it would need to issue a RFP. Everyone agreed.
- e. Everyone also agreed that the advisory committee needs to settle on a direction in order to help the City make an informed decision about what to do with the BDU.
 - i. Dennis Morrison agreed that bringing in a consultant from Infocomm would be helpful.
 - ii. Rick Dietz said he would like to learn what other U.S. cities are doing with their fiber; he will do some research and try to forward this information to the group.

II. External Environment

- a. Charlie Webb said that it would be important for the group to have an inventory of the City's (fiber) assets as well as a list of potential competitors in Bloomington.
- b. To address this, Greg Volan shared a map of the BDU with the advisory committee. There are six conduits buried in a loop around the City; each conduit has 96 strands of fiber. There is one small section at the southern part of the loop (near the Herald Times) that was recently completed but still needs to be wired.
- c. The group identified the following competitors: Cinergy Networks (KDL), SBC, Insight, Smithville Telephone, FastWire (Millennium Properties), Ion, and possibly Indiana Fiberworks.
 - i. Greg Volan indicated that in the past, these entities were not willing to disclose the locations of their fiber.
 - ii. ITS has been trying to get a sense of the City's capital and maintenance costs for its fiber optic infrastructure.
- d. Greg Volan said that the City needs to price its fiber so that competitors have an incentive to lease/buy it from the City instead of laying their own.
- e. Greg Volan also reminded the group that the City cannot provide telecom services to end users directly; they can only offer the opportunity to a third party who would then interact with the end user.
- f. Ron Walker noted that the pricing scheme will be an important policy decision, and further supported the idea of bringing in a consultant.

III. Clarification of Goals/ Review of Proposed Policies

- a. Dennis Morrison suggested that the group further clarify its goals prior to bringing in a consultant. In this way, a meeting with an expert will be less of a "data dump" and more of a question/answer session.
 - i. The group decided that the next meeting on March 25, 2004 at 4:00 pm would be used to clarify goals.
 - ii. The group will invite Jim Goldman/Infocomm to the following meeting, tentatively scheduled for April 8, 2004 at 4:00 pm.
 - iii. A third meeting will be held on April 22, 2004 at 4:00 pm; location to be determined.

- iv. Greg Volan asked if there was additional information the group needed prior to the March 25th meeting.
- v. Ron Walker asked for a history/timeline of the BDU
- b. The group reviewed the handout "Policies for Bloomington Digital Underground".
 - i. Ron Walker asked whether Mayor Kruzan was aware of the proposed BDU policies and asked that the committee confirm the document's language and definitions with the Mayor.
- c. Greg Volan noted that the "General Principles" in Section I of the document are long term goals of the BDU. The key principle is that the BDU needs to be a source of economic development for the City.
- d. Linda Williamson mentioned that local businesses are frustrated because they do not know where conduit is located throughout the City.
- e. Mark McMath shared Bloomington Hospital's experiences with trying to expand their fiber network. BH met with all local conduit owners to gauge their interest in working together to deliver telecom services to the hospital. The problem has been that new providers keep entering the market; this makes it difficult to agree on a pricing scheme.
- f. Mark McMath asked whether there is a way to get all Bloomington telecom providers working together. He noted that cooperation between all parties could keep costs low for everyone and provide telecom services to underserved areas of the City.
 - i. Bruce Myers indicated potential problems with getting all local stakeholders involved. The last time this issue was raised, they were very reluctant to disclose company information. Others agreed.

IV. Closing

- a. The group agreed to share contact information with one another.
- b. Rick Routon will set up an e-mail account for the advisory committee:
BDU@bloomington.in.gov
 - i. Committee members will send any questions/comments to the list in preparation for the March 25th meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Minutes submitted by Heather Collins, March 18, 2004