Minutes - UC2B Marketing and Outreach Meeting Feb 22, 2011

Meeting called to order at 7:12pm by Zernial Bogan, who was serving as chair in place of Brandon Bowersox.

Present: John Kersh, Zernial Bogan, Ray Mitchell, Libby Tyler, Connie Dillard-Myers, Jared Dunn, Brandon Bowersox (arrived at 7:20pm)

Agenda Item #2 Agenda approval: Ray Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Libby Tyler seconded. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 Ray Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes from 2/8/11 as presented. Libby Tyler seconded. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #4 Policy and Technical Committee Reports:

John Kersh: 50% design documents were submitted for review for the Mar. Univ. of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting.

Special meeting coming up this Thurs with a group of ministers, the UC2B Faith-Based Committee for Community Benefit Agreements. They wish to have a productive conversation with the policy board on how to integrate the community into the project and provide for community participation in and benefit from the UC2B project.

Connie Dillard-Myers: Technical committee is having difficulty with their communication with Paul Duke of Shive-Hattery.

Ray Mitchell: There is disagreement on design, what experts are attempting to design to make it a resilient network vs. what is in the budget to allow for maximum resiliency and idealized design philosophies. Eventually reverted to the original design because of the budget and time. However, a lack of actual figures frustrated everyone.

John Kersh: The engineer is serving several masters, but primarily the university (who is in charge of administering the engineering contract, and is on a tight deadline. This is putting them in a difficult position. Ideally everyone would have all of this information and be participating in a deliberative decision making process, but the constraints and complexity of the project are making that difficult.

Zernial Bogan: Recapped the discussion about the tradeoffs involving manholes and future fiber capacity vs. budgets and time constraints from the Policy meeting.

[Brandon Bowersox arrived at 8:20pm and assumes duty as meeting chair.]

Agenda Item #5 UC2B subcommittee reports: Items in this section were covered in Agenda Item #4.

Agenda Item #6A Assign work groups:

Brandon Bowersox: A couple of pieces for smaller group-work

A. Audience-focused work groups. What/how do we need to speak to each audience? Residents, Businesses/Apartments, Anchors.

John Kersh: Endorses this step, and says it ties in well with the PSA, and how to formulate both the larger marketing plan and the PSA.

The way UPTV recommended to do the PSA was preemptively answer questions that we know people have, or to answer questions that we want answered about the projects.

Ray Mitchell: suggested that the subcommittee break out into groups and formulate messages, then come back together around the PSA

Brandon Bowersox: Next meeting could be almost entirely group time, then come back together at the end like Ray (Mitchell) said.

Libby Tyler: How do residents break down? FTTH and everyone else?

John Kersh: Yes. Easements come first though, and this is where it gets more complicated. Also apartment owners and residential property managers are somewhat different than businesss owners or commercial property owners, because of class of services. In the end, an apartment owner or residential property manager is looking to provide residential services to tenants, not business-class services.

Ray Mitchell: Is end-user a useful distinction instead?

John Kersh: Agreed with Ray and referred to his previous comment. Also, we can use GIS to distinguish between owner and renter-occupied for easements.

Zernial Bogan: (referencing Agenda Item 6B about the PSA) We need a general PSA to explain the project.

Libby Tyler: Can we hire business students or someone else with expertise on formulating our message?

Connie Dillard-Myers: The semester timing is bad. Most students are already on their projects for the semester. That's why we looked into this earlier, but we couldn't get anything moving in time for this semester.

Brandon Bowersox (to John Kersh): Did you ever get information about how much money is available for marketing, aside from door-to-door (canvassing)?

John Kersh: We technically don't have a marketing budget, but a certain amount of money is put aside for canvassing.

Libby Tyler: At the City of Urbana, we are able to pay for communication out of our federal grants.

John Kersh: Mike Smeltzer says he is looking into this, and will follow up. Some of the canvass budget *might* be able to re-allocated.

Ray Mitchell: Can we maybe hire an intern looking for a chance at future employment?

Rev. Bogan: We have big entity problems in terms of hiring anyone right now.

Libby Tyler: suggested recruiting members to the committee that have specialized marketing talents?

Brandon Bowersox: Back to working groups. Who is interested in what group? Residential, Business, and Anchors.

Rev. Bogan: What are anchors? Confusion now that the list may have been reduced.

Jared Dunn: And is this something we have to deal with and provide a response to? How public was the process of expanding the anchor list, and do people feel they have been made promises which are now being broken?

John Kersh: We have a bit of a PR problem with the reductions in the anchor list, though nothing in the process was officially announced publicly. It's public knowledge in that people who attended meetings would know of any information shared there and minutes and all documents presented to the committees are publicly accessible, but Anchor Institution status (approved/wait-listed) wasn't promoted or promised directly to any anchors outside of the original list presented on the grant proposal accepted and funded by the NTIA.

Work Group Assignments

Anchors Group: Bowersox, Dunn

Businesses Group: Mitchell, Rev. Bogan

Residents Group: Dillard-Myers, Tyler

John Kersh will fill in on whichever committee is short at any given time.

Agenda Item #6b) Development of Public Service Annoucement

John Kersh: UPTV recommends that we, as a group, develop the content of the PSA by focusing on asking and answering "preemptive" project questions or compiling a list of FAQs that will serve as a the content of the PSA.

Ray Mitchell: How long [can/will the PSA be]?

Jared Dunn: In our class they are recommending getting plenty of footage and then cutting it down to size for different formats. A short ad-length PSA can get repeated lots of times a day, whereas a longer one can explain more but won't get as much repetition. You need both if possible, or a variety of formats to fit different contexts and mediums.

Bowersox: What are [property and distribution] rights on this? Can we distribute it on other channels, YouTube, etc?

Libby Tyler: When we made one on bicycling, we were able to distribute it widely and had rights as long as we credited UPTV.

John Kersh: Do we need to get other committees involved here? Probably. We need to identify questions, brainstorm, then UPTV can develop a script in partnership with John. What we produce will also be available for Champaign Government Television.

Zernial Bogan: We need to use WBCP because it hits the target area and the majority of them listen to it. If we are a nonprofit we are entitled to free PSA time. We need to look into this.

John Kersh: I have looked into that, plus Spanish-speaking radio stations, and other outlets. I am also looking into options that may cost money, but may be worth the investment.

Libby Tyler: I've tried to do PSA's for planning and for the cities. They aren't well picked up. They're supposed to, but they're grudging. WEFT was the best.

Brandon Bowersox: WILL has a segment called Public Square. They run 1 2-minute commentary piece a week.

John Kersh: I've had media come to me [seeking information about the project]. I did a WCFN segment already. WILL interviewed him when we were looking for additional possible anchor institutions.

Jared Dunn: What about the local TV morning shows? They do quite a bit of community content.

Brandon Bowersox: Once we have the PSA, we can chop it up and re-use it in other media.

Agenda Item #7: Discussion Items:

a)   Report from UC2B Faith-Based Committee for a Community Benefit Agreement

(deferred to a future meeting)

b)   Comcast/NBC Universal merger

Brandon Bowersox: Do people have questions about the Comcast/NBC merger memo that Mike Smeltzer sent out? What are additional implications?

John Kersh: We'll get competition on price, but they won't be able to match service, speed, etc. We need to focus on promoting the value received per dollar spent, not solely on the price.

Brandon Bowersox: This [Comcast price] is introductory and limited and complicated. Our $19.99 is a permanent price, and simple. We should emphasize this.

Jared Dunn: Comcast offer is very limited, involves a lot of hoop-jumping. For people who can't hit the price point for access in any other way, it may be worth it, but if we offer the $4.99 wireless option, we undercut that as well.

Zernial Bogan: The time limit with children is a problem too. A lot of our audience doesn't have children of that age, and what will people do when their kids age out?

John Kersh: Two things in response as a subcommittee: 1) We don't see this as adversarial, we embrace this because it will increase connectivity. 2) Also, we stand to benefit when people run up against the limitations of the Comcast deal.

Ray Mitchell: The inexpensive computer part [that Comcast has agreed to offer] could be to our advantage, depending on the terms.

Dillard-Myers: You also have to pay installation costs with Comcast if you don't already have the infrastructure, and even then, you pay for the hardware. We can beat that too.

Bowersox: We can say: simple, free, no hidden costs.

Jared Dunn: What about ESPN3-style bundled content services? What will this mean for us in competition with Comcast if these keep growing or begin to displace cable TV for some and we only offer straight data?

John Kersh: While UC2B will provide data-only retail service, other ISPs that offer VoIP and video services have agreed to provide their services over the UC2B network. Notwithstanding these agreements for video and VoIP, UC2B is still positioned to compete in a la carte video viewing because of its data service. Therefore, if there is a shift from cable TV toward video/entertainment content provided solely on data service, UC2B will be able to accommodate it.

Brandon Bowersox: The next meeting will be dedicated to the Work Groups.

The next meeting will be at its regularly scheduled 11:45 time. At this meeting, we will discuss moving our meetings to 5:00pm. John and Brandon will take the lead on this.

John Kersh: Announcement: We now have an online working space, under the tech committee's wiki. Post items of general interest, plus agendas and materials for each meeting will be there too.

c) **Review of Action Items from previous meetings**

(deferred to a future meeting)