

Clarke County

BROADBAND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017



A meeting of the Broadband Implementation Committee was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Tuesday, July 11, 2017.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Robina Bouffault, Mary Daniel, Bev McKay

Absent: Scott Kreider

Staff Present: Brandon Stidham, Planning Director

CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Stidham called the meeting to order at 2:12PM.

AGENDA

The Committee approved the agenda as presented by Staff.

Yes: Bouffault (moved), Daniel (seconded), McKay

No: none

Absent: Kreider

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee approved the June 13, 2017 meeting minutes as presented by Staff.

Yes: Bouffault (seconded), McKay (moved)

No: none

Absent: Kreider

Abstained: Daniel

OLD BUSINESS

Progress Report, Request for Information (RFI)

Mr. Stidham provided a brief update on the RFI process and distributed a copy of an addendum that Mike Legge has issued in response to vendor inquiries. He noted that the RFI closes on July 25 and that he hopes to distribute copies of all responses before he leaves on vacation beginning July 28.

Discussion, Broadband Website Layout Review

Mr. Stidham provided an overview of the draft website layout that he assembled with Ms. Bouffault for the Committee's review. In regards to the Tower Inventory Map, Mr. McKay asked whether tall structures like silos are included. Mr. Stidham replied that only towers currently housing communications antennas are included on the map. Mr. McKay said that such structures should be included on the map and Ms. Daniel said that this could be done on an opt-in basis where property owners voluntarily request to have their tall structures included on the map. Mr. Stidham said that he did not think this would be necessary because site scouts will identify all tall structures in a search area as one of the first things they do in looking for a new tower site. Mr. McKay also expressed concern about whether cellular providers in constructing new towers will set rental prices so high that it would be infeasible for wireless internet service providers (WISPs) to locate there. Mr. Stidham replied that tower owners will want to lease out as much space as possible to recoup their development costs and that WISPs can locate in between the cellular providers' arrays. Mr. McKay also referenced two recent newspaper articles and a discussion he had with a WISP company owner regarding emerging broadband technologies that could help rural areas like Clarke County.

Regarding the school board page, Ms. Bouffault said that she has obtained basic information from school board staff and that more information will be forthcoming on the Kajeet broadband program and an upcoming survey on broadband usage.

Regarding the tower inventory map page, Ms. Bouffault suggested that the inclusion of PCTDA locations on the map could create confusion as to whether or not towers are located in these spots. Mr. Stidham said that this page is directed at industry providers and that it should be clear to them that the PCTDA spots represent future tower locations. Ms. Bouffault replied that the map could be amended to better explain the PCTDAs. Mr. Stidham suggested removing the map altogether and including download links for the Tower Inventory Maps – one with PCTDAs and one without the PCTDAs. The text description for each link could clearly explain that the PCTDAs represent future development areas for new towers. The Committee members were comfortable with this change to the layout.

The Committee by consensus authorized Staff to begin working with the IT Department to develop a draft website that the Committee would be able to review before the site is published. Ms. Bouffault said that the draft website could be accessed via a non-public link while it is in draft form so that Staff and elected officials can review and edit before publishing. Mr. McKay said that the draft website should be forwarded to the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Len Capelli for comments. Mr. Stidham said that once the Committee has approved the draft website, he will send the draft website link to the Commission, Board, and Mr. Capelli for review and request comments back within a week. If no substantive comments are received, the website will go live on a specified date. If there are comments or concerns, the Committee will reconvene to address them. Ms. Bouffault asked whether the Board has to approve the website and Mr. Stidham and Mr. McKay said that the Committee is already authorized to create and release the website. The Committee agreed with this approach.

The members agreed to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, August 23 at 2:00PM.

On a motion by Ms. Bouffault, seconded by Ms. Daniel, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50PM.



Brandon Stidham, Planning Director