



SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

Plymouth City Commission Committee of the Whole

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2024 – 5:00 P.M.-6:15 P.M.

PLYMOUTH CITY HALL – 201 S. MAIN ST.

City of Plymouth

201 S. Main

Plymouth, Michigan 48170-1637

www.plymouthmi.gov

Phone 734-453-1234

Fax 734-455-1892

The Committee of the Whole will meet on Monday August 5, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. for an informational presentation related to the City of Plymouth Communications Study.

-This presentation is informational only-



SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

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- 1) COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - CALL TO ORDER
- 2) PRESENTATION BY DENNIS O'CONNOR -This presentation is informational only-
TO PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATED TO THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH
COMMUNICATIONS STUDY
- 3) ADJOURNMENT

Persons with disabilities needing assistance with this should contact the City Clerk's office at 734-453-1234 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. An attempt will be made to make reasonable accommodations.

City of Plymouth Strategic Plan 2022-2026

GOAL AREA ONE - SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and establish sustainable financial model(s) for major capital projects, Old Village business district, 35th District Court, recreation department, and public safety
2. Incorporate eco-friendly, sustainable practices into city assets, services, and policies; including more environmentally friendly surfaces, reduced impervious surfaces, expanded recycling and composting services, prioritizing native and pollinator-friendly plants, encouraging rain gardens, and growing a mature tree canopy
3. Partner with or become members of additional environmentally aware organizations
4. Increase technology infrastructure into city assets, services, and policies
5. Continue sustainable infrastructure improvement for utilities, facilities, and fleet
6. Address changing vehicular habits, including paid parking system /parking deck replacement plan, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and one-way street options

GOAL AREA TWO – STAFF DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND SUCCESSION

OBJECTIVES

1. Create a 5-year staffing projection
2. Review current recruitment strategies and identify additional resources
3. Identify/establish flex scheduling positions and procedures
4. Develop a plan for an internship program
5. Review potential department collaborations
6. Hire an additional recreation professional
7. Review current diversity, equity, and inclusion training opportunities
8. Seek out training opportunities for serving diverse communities

GOAL AREA THREE - COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

OBJECTIVES

1. Engage in partnerships with public, private and non-profit entities
2. Increase residential/business education programs for active citizen engagement
3. Robust diversity, equity, and inclusion programs
4. Actively participate with multi-governmental lobbies (Michigan Municipal League, Conference of Western Wayne, etc.)

GOAL AREA FOUR - ATTRACTIVE, LIVABLE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

1. Create vibrant commercial districts by seeking appropriate mixed-use development, marketing transitional properties, and implementing Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) practices
2. Improve existing and pursue additional recreational and public green space opportunities and facilities for all ages
3. Develop multi-modal transportation plan which prioritizes pedestrian and biker safety
4. Improve link between Hines Park, Old Village, Downtown Plymouth, Plymouth Township, and other regional destinations
5. Maintain safe, well-lit neighborhoods with diverse housing stock that maximizes resident livability and satisfaction
6. Modernize and update zoning ordinance to reflect community vision
7. Implement Kellogg Park master plan

“The government in this community is small and accessible to all concerned.”

-Plymouth Mayor Joe Bida

November 1977

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

To: Mayor & City Commission

CC: *S:\Manager\Sincock Files\Memorandum - Communications Presentation Committee of the Whole - 08-05-24.doc*

From: Paul J. Sincock -City Manager

Date: 8/2/2024

Re: City Communications Review

The City Commission adopted a five-year goal of Community Connectivity, which includes key objectives of engaging in partnerships, and active citizen engagement. Further, the City Commission set as a one-year task of developing communications, marketing, and branding plans.

The City Commission met one on one with the facilitator back in April of this year, there was a focus group of residents that met in March, and the facilitator met one on one with the administrative leadership. All of those sessions have been memorialized by the facilitator.

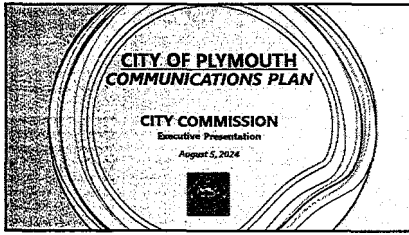
The report was originally planned to be due to the City Commission in early July but was pushed back to August in order to facilitate a Commission closed session meeting with the City Attorney on a more immediate matter.

Our facilitator, Dennis O'Connor, grew up here in our community and has spent 15 years as an Operations Director for Maritz Communications, worked for the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers, and has served as a local elected official.

We anticipate that the facilitator will make his presentation to the City Commission. He is hoping for some interactive discussions with the City Commission, and with the public during the questions and answer session.

I will note that we are somewhat time limited in that we will really need to be able to clear the room and start making our way to our neighborhood park regular City Commission meeting prior to 6:30 p.m.

If you have any questions in advance of the meeting, please feel free to contact me.





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Dennis (DOC) O'Connor

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

- President, DoCOM Consultants, LLC
- Grew up in Plymouth
- Graduated from Plymouth Canton High School
- Sport Editor, Plymouth Observer
- News Editor, Canton Observer
- Corporate Experience: 15 years, Operations Director at Maritz Communications Company
- Certified Focus Group Moderator, Burke Institute

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2

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OVERVIEW


CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 3

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Situation Analysis

CITY MANAGER DIRECTION

1. Give us a critical review of what we're doing now.
2. Give us direction on where we want to be in the future.




CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 4

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The Plan's Organization

12 SECTIONS

1. Overview
2. Strengths
3. Weaknesses
4. Message Discipline
5. Message Matrix
6. Short-Term Recommendations
7. Long-Term Recommendations
8. Appendix: Meeting Protocol
9. Appendix: Communications Manager Roles & Responsibilities
10. Assessment Phase I: Administration Feedback
11. Assessment Phase II: Community Focus Group Feedback
12. Assessment Phase III: City Commissioners' Feedback



CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 5

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Goals & Objectives

- To improve its focus on "community engagement."
- To solidify its customer service "brand message."
- To develop a 2-way communication/feedback system to all City of Plymouth stakeholders.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 6

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Strategies

How do we support these Objectives?

- 1) To further define and build upon the "emotional connection"
- 2) To further deliver accurate, thorough and constant communications.
- 3) To develop an effective and sustainable feedback system.

UTIMINATE GOAL: ADVOCACY

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 7

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Premise

- City of Plymouth's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026, under Goal #3: **Community Connectivity**
- Mr. Griffin's: "Taking Plymouth to the Next Level."
- His observations included:
 1. You have an amazing culture
 2. Don't change anything about your culture
 3. Sell the story
 4. Describe what "IT" means to the Community
 5. Tell the story seven times

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 8

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Methodology

- The Public:** An intense 2 1/2-hour focus group session with a good cross-section of 25 passionate citizens
- Plymouth City Commissioners:** one-on-one interviews with each Elected Official.
- Plymouth Administrators (City Manager's Leadership Staff):** one-on-one interviews with each Department Head.

• Deliverable: *Detailed Report in the Appendix of the Communications Plan*

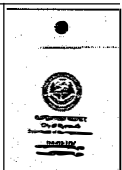
CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 9

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Themes

1. Accessibility
2. Volume
3. Emergencies and essential city services

Please Note:
"Volume" is impressive and extraordinary
 • Comparable to other local municipalities and school districts with established Communications Departments
 • "Cross-functional" staffwork ethic




CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 10

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Get Agreement on the Problem

- Improve the Website
 - Very clunky
 - Not user friendly
 - Feature full calendar on the HOME page
- Improve 2-way Communications
 - Perception vs. Reality
 - Community members want to be heard
 - How do we create dialogue with community members?
 - How do we create conversation with community members?



CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 11

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What vs. How

- The issue is not **WHAT** should be communicated.
- Rather, this plan focuses on **HOW** communications should be delivered in an easy and streamlined way

What
 • *City staffers outperform many large municipalities and school districts*

How
 • *There is an unintentional lack of focus*

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 12

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STRENGTHS

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 13

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Strengths

- Bullet-point summaries of Communications STRENGTHS, based on our interviews/facilitation with City Commissioners, City Administrators and the Citizens' Focus Group.
SWOT Analysis in Appendix.
SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.)
- As mentioned earlier, STRENGTHS focus on accessibility, volume and effectively communicating emergencies/essential services.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 14

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Strengths

- We give out a lot of information. In some cases, we give out information overload.
- We're very transparent.
- We have multiple people giving out huge amounts of information.
- We overcommunicate. We're really good at communicating, and we communicate in every way possible.
- There is no lack of interest. Residents will always give us feedback.
- The Administrative staff is very professional.
- The amount of communication is unbelievable.
- We attract Facebook users all over the world - because of our popular events.
- City website has a lot of information, very comprehensive, but very hard to navigate, very hard to find information quickly.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 15

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WEAKNESSES

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 16

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Weaknesses

- Bullet-point summaries of Communications WEAKNESSES, based on our interviews/facilitation with City Commissioners, City Administrators and the Citizens' Focus Group.
SWOT Analysis in Appendix.
SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.)
- As mentioned earlier, WEAKNESSES focus on the website and the need to improve 2-way Communications.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 17

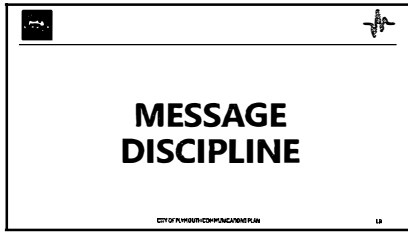
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Weaknesses

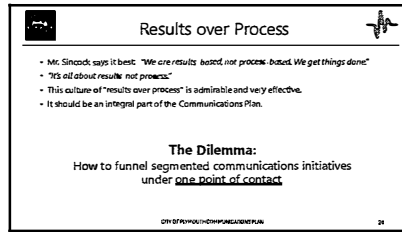
- Website: Very clunky.
 - o It takes too many clicks to find information.
 - o Website should contain basic information on taxes, programs, services, upcoming meetings and a calendar of events, etc.
- Website is very hard to navigate/it's hard to find information. We know it's there, but it's hard to find.
- Communications is important, but it's not a top priority. Everyone is tasked with doing it, which means no one oversees it.
- We need to make things EASY for open, community dialogue
- Communication Plan should include strategies for 2-way feedback and public input on various City issues.
- Calendar items are incomplete
- No graphic design standards, everything looks different, especially Parks & Recreation communications. Very inconsistent.
- Communications should have "one voice," "one face-and-free" one "visual optic"

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 18

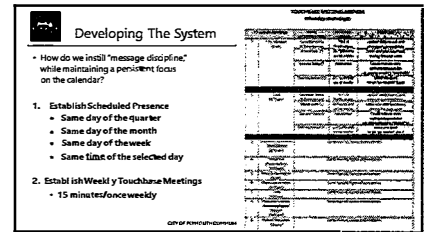
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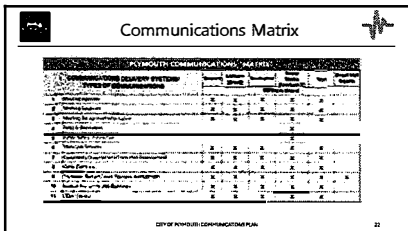
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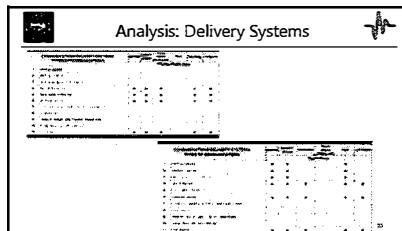
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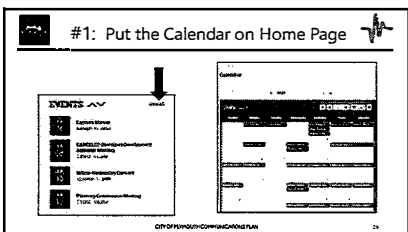
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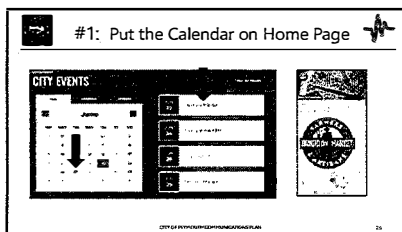
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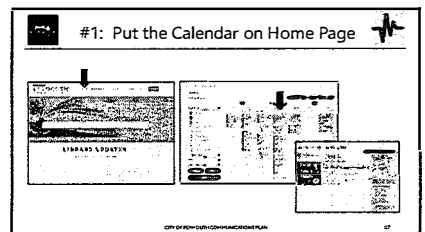
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#2: Website Enhancements

- Put the Calendar on the HOME Page
- Content: Three areas of major interest:
 - Public safety (Police & fire activities)
 - Events
 - Topics that impact budget (where are tax dollars being spent)
- Website needs to be the "hub" of all information (continued use of icons)
- Website should serve as the AUTHENTIC source of City news.



CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 28

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#3: Improve 2-Way Communications

Shift your focus away from "Citizen Comments" Go "Old School" with your Community Engagement

An article in the June 2024 edition of *PUBLIC MANAGEMENT*, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) monthly magazine, said it best:

"In an increasingly digital world, there is no replacement for personal interaction with the residents of your community."

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 29

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#3: Improve 2-Way Communications


- Proactively Engage with your Constituents:
 - Make it a habit to meet with your constituents BEFORE decisions are made. Have those conversations. Engage community members' opinions. Create the dialogue individually or in groups of 2 or 3 Commissioners:
 - At neighborhood block parties
 - After summer Commission Meetings in park locations
 - After church
 - At the grocery store
 - After PTA meetings at the local school building
 - Set-up "coffee" at your home – in addition to the City-sponsored events.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 30

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#3: Improve 2-Way Communications

- Establish Quarterly (4 times/annually) "Coffee" with the Commissioners.
- Promote "information sharing" sessions through in *Plymouth Pulse* Newsletter articles.
- Hold additional "Committee of the Whole" Meetings (6 instead of 4).




CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 31

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Additional Short-Term Recommendations

- Segmented Message Delivery System.
- Segmented Message Format.
- Use More Hyperlinks.
- Assign Commissioner O'Donnell's Facebook Format.
- Did You Know?
- Short-Cuts.
- Newsletter Enhancements (Continued).
- Newsletter Enhancements (Design)
- Engage Occasionally Radio Station.
- Concise MPRA News and Notifications.
- Add a graphic or photograph to every LISTSERV (email) Communication.
- Social Media Content Observations.
- Establish Communication Standards.
- Establish and Standardize Guidelines for Plymouth loyal.
- Standardize Guidelines for Parks & Recreation Communications.



CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 32

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LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 33

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#1: Increase "Focus" on Communications

- What's the old football adage? *"If you have two or three quarterbacks, you actually have none."*
- Option #1:** Job realignment of existing resources
- Option #2:** Hire communications person
 - Deliverable: *Detailed Job Description in the Appendix*
 - Deliverable: *Day in the Life of a communications person*

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 34

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#1: Increase Communications Staff

Optional "Staff" Alternatives


- Unpaid/paid local college interns
- Unpaid/paid high school students (PCEP)
- Unpaid/paid high school students (MIPA)

Cost-effective, but the "learning curve" would be substantial.

CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 35

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#2: Increase Use of Photos/Video

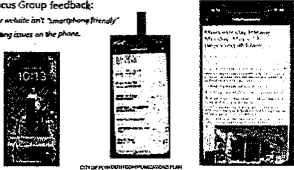


CITY OF PLYMOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 36

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#3: Purchase an APP with a new Website

- Public Focus Group feedback
 - The City website isn't "smartphone friendly"
 - Form filling times on the phone.

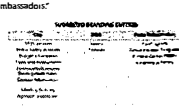


CITY OF FORT MYERS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 37

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Additional Long-Term Recommendations

- Create a Vlog "library" of Memorable Events/Activities.
- Repurpose Government 101 Pamphlet on Video.
- Launch a "Campaign" to Drive More Residents to your Website.
- Leverage Citizen Academy Graduates as "Ambassadors"
- Create a "Pulse" icon.
- Create a separate website for Parks & Recreation.
- Develop a Comprehensive Education Plan for residents and businesses.



CITY OF FORT MYERS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 38

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Appendix: 47 Pages

- Suggest Meeting Protocol
- Suggested Job Description for a Communications Manager
- Three (3) Assessment Reports:
 - Public Focus Group
 - City Commissioners one-on-one interviews
 - City Administrator one-on-one interviews

CITY OF FORT MYERS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 39

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Questions & Answers



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