

Meeting of the Edgemoor Citizens Association Board of Directors –January 18, 2018

Minutes

Present: David Barnes, Josh Perelman, Jeffrey Drichta, Bridget Foist, and Joyce Gwadz.

Call to Order: 7:20 PM.

Old Business – Action Items from Previous Meeting

1. Costs for Printing Directory with AtoZ vs. local printer.

AtoZ does it for free with advertising vs. \$1200+ for local printer without advertising.

Decisions: Use AtoZ for printing the 2018 Directory.

2. Accepting Online Credit/Debit Card Payments for Membership/Renewal

- Network Solutions \$99/year vs. PayPal (through AtoZ account) 2.2% plus \$.30/transaction (for non-profits)

Decisions: Use PayPal for card transaction processing for memberships and renewals. Costs are comparable for the two options, with final costs being dependent usage rates. But, the PayPal option is substantially less work. (Decision may be revisited if subsequent information on membership numbers changes the assessment.)

3. Ways to increase membership

Decisions: Prepare separate new member solicitation, and current member renewal, letters. New member letter to be addressed to “Neighbor” at the street address. Jeffrey to prepare first draft of letters.

New Business

1. Membership Renewal Letter

Decisions: Given decision to print directory through AtoZ with advertising for free, there was no need to consider ways to reduce number of printed directory needed. The renewal letter and new member letter will include an Opt-In choice to auto-renew membership each year.

2. Vice President Position – Should we try to fill?

Decisions: Seek a new board member as permitted by by-laws. Several candidates were identified and may be contacted one at a time. Further discussion of filling the Vice President position was tabled.

3. “Welcome to Edgemoor” signs at entrances to neighborhood (A suggestion from a resident to further discourage cut-through traffic).

Decisions: Depending on the budget, we may be able to look at ways to beautify some neighborhood entrance locations (e.g., with vegetation, possibly signage) to make the entrance to the neighborhood more obvious and attractive. More discussion at a future date.

4. District 1 Candidate Forum Sponsorship

Decisions: ECA will co-sponsor a Montgomery County District 1 County Council Candidate Forum in conjunction with the Town of Chevy Chase and other neighborhood groups, providing there is no appearance of favoring one candidate or party.

5. Bethesda Fire Department Report

Ambulance 706 is now in service.

Adjourned: 8:25 PM

David's Notes

Old Business – Action Items from Previous Meeting

1. Costs for Printing Directory with AtoZ vs. local printer. (Josh)

I think the answer is going to be that AtoZ doesn't do the printing, and that the AtoZ software just produces a document we can send to a local printer. The last printed directory has a full page add in it for a printer (inside back cover) and I suspect they printed it for us for free or for a reduced price in exchange for the advertising. I think that, if true, that's the best way to go.

2. Accepting Online Credit/Debit Card Payments for Membership/Renewal

Josh's Payment Processor (Josh) Josh is looking into this, but I suspect it's the most expensive
Network Solutions (David) Cost - \$99/year all in

Paypal (David) Cost - Transaction fee of 2.2% plus \$.30 per transaction

I'm determined to go ahead with credit card payments and it seems that Network Solutions (our website provider) is going to be the best bet. Paypal will be cheaper if we only get a small number (less than 1/4 of the total) and that might be true for the first year. But, if we really push the credit card stuff, we should be able to cut down on the checks and the labor and the Network Solutions cost will be better in the long run. Also, if we have credit card capability, we can also push automatic annual renewals - which would help cut down on the work and the cost. Any thoughts?

3. Ways to increase membership

Change the renewal letter so it separately and specifically addresses new memberships. (We send the letter to all neighborhood addresses, but the current letter sounds like its about only renewals.)

Go through our databases and specifically identify non-member households and send them a separate letter and maybe even try to do something similar for EC-Net users who are not members. Not sure how hard those would be to do, but I want to have Josh and I look into it. Quickly. Any thoughts?

4. ECA Board e-mail addresses

Anyone tried the @edgemoorcitizens.org addresses set up? Want to switch? I'm going to do it myself, and Josh already uses his. But, we are the ones who are using doing the most ECA emailing. For the rest of you, I think it's up to each person how they want to do.

New Business

1. Membership Renewal Letter

- Fix and update last version.
- Separate letter for non-member households? (How much harder would that be to mail) Maybe two separate paragraphs in one letter.
- Add summary of directory formats (Online, Phone App, and Printed) and encourage people to use Online or App. Then add an opt-in box for a printed directory:

___ I would like to receive a printed ECA Directory

- Add option for automatic renewal each year. Would this cut down work or make it harder?

___ I would like to have my membership automatically renewed each year.

[Requires Credit Card Payment]

E-mail Renewal Request?

Email renewal request first to try to get as many as we can without printing/mailling letters. Then follow up with printed letters for the remainder. Reduce cost/labor. But, how hard is that to do? More work than it's worth.

Printing, assembling, and mailing schedule - Last time, we folded letters and stuffed envelopes at a meeting. How about someone's home instead. Wine could be involved. (Access issue for Jeffrey.)

Changes needed to letter?

Opt-In For Printed Directory? Opt out? To cut down on the need for hard copy directories. Letter would have to explain the great virtues of the electronic directories to encourage more use.

Auto-Renew Option? As noted above

Others? I think that the current letter is generally not very good or very clear.

2. Vice President Position – Should we try to fill? Who? I'd like to find someone. Hank Levine? "Upper" Edgemoor person (current board members mostly from the southern part of the neighborhood).

3. "Welcome to Edgemoor" signs at entrances to neighborhood

(A suggestion from a resident to further discourage cut-through traffic). This was from Elyse Jacob (who lives on Fairfax at the end of Wessling). My initial reaction to her suggestion was unfavorable, because I thought her point was that she wanted an impressive display of Edgemoor exclusivity. But, when we talked, her point was more that she thinks a sign (subtle,

but noticeable) that conveys to drivers that they are entering a residential neighborhood might reduce cut-through traffic and/or confused drivers who end up driving through the neighborhood by accident. I'm not sure I buy that reasoning, but I told her I'd bring it up and see if the board had any interest in supporting the idea and funding signs. She was talking specifically about a sign at the intersection of Fairfax and Clarendon to cut down on non-residents making the turn onto Fairfax heading north into Edgemoor, but the idea is just as valid at multiple other points along the edge of the neighborhood. Any thoughts?

4. Candidate Forum sponsorship?