Broadband/Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

City Hall, Chase Room
401 S. Park Avenue ı Winter Park, Florida

Present:

Michael Poole, Wes Naylor, Richard James, Paul Conway and James Everett. Absent: Chris Johnson.

Also Present

Director of Information Technology Parsram Rajaram
Assistant Director of Information Technology Sujay Sukhadia
City Clerk Rene Cranis

Call to Order

Mr. Rajaram called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Approval of September 30, 2021, work session minutes. Approved by consensus.

Staff Updates

a. Frog Contract

Mr. Rajaram stated that he provided the Frog Contract to the board members in preparation for this meeting. Mr. Poole asked staff to provide a diagram of where lines are being run through the city's conduit. Discussion followed on what parts of the contract may be proprietary. Mr. Rajaram will follow up with Michael Voll and provide additional information pertaining to the contract. Additional discussion followed on easements relating to the Frog broadband conduit and franchise fees.

Mr. Rajaram noted that the Frog Contract was to complete Phase I of the Fiber Optics Task Force recommendations, which is to connect all city buildings. Mr. Poole added that Frog has their own fiber network and now have the ability to offer fiber to customers. Discussion followed on terms of Frog contract, rights, business model, shared conduit and areas covered by the contract. Mr. Rajaram Parsram suggested having Director of Budget Peter Moore and Frog CEO Michael Voll attend the next meeting and explained the background and reasons Frog was selected from the RFP process.

Mr. Everett asked for a status of the work entailed in the Frog contract. Mr. Rajaram stated that the expectation is for all of the city buildings to be connected by March 2022 and will share the time line.

b. Funding Sources.

Mr. Rajaram stated that there is $20k budgeted for consultant to assistant in preparation of the broadband project. He expressed concern that the amount may not be enough as the process is lengthy.

c. Network Resiliency.

Mr. Rajaram stated that Frog is building a fiber ring for the City, providing resiliency from network outages. He explained that the design would prevent a single cut from putting a location offline. He explained that there are some exceptions and gave examples. He added that the network is being built with resiliency in mind and the goal is to ensure that the backbone infrastructure has that resiliency. He stated that the task of committee to develop a plan for current, medium and long-term. Mr. Rajaram spoke on other smart city models which can be used as template for the city and stated that the committee needs to first define what smart city means. He explained the concept of network resiliency and circuits/loops.

Public Comments (for items not on Agenda)

There was no public comment.

Non-Action Items

a. Community/Educational engagement.

Mr. Rajaram stated that in reading the Orlando Future-Ready plan, the secret to their success includes engaging with stakeholders, including residents, outside experts and cities who have a plan in place already. He stated that this was an opportunity for the committee to discuss what the process of engagement will look like for the city.

Dr. James expressed the importance of resident input and raised the question of how to attract residents and stakeholders to participate, and in what format. Discussion followed on limited funding, using Rollins that can provide expertise and venue, use of Orlando's experts and/or other businesses such as Tavistock, alternate media channels, use of city venues for meeting space and getting residents the vision of a smart city. Mr. Poole suggested collecting surveys that other cities distributed to their residents to determine the types of questions used and the responses. Mr. Naylor reiterated that the definition of a smart city is needed to move forward and that definition can mean different things to different people.

Discussion followed on priorities, deliverables, budget and funding, and resident and customer input. Mr. Naylor noted that he spoke with Sam Stark at Rollins College regarding holding a community input forum with the city between Thanksgiving and Christmas, alternatively the city hosting a forum at the Farmer's Market. Mr. Conway suggested having an online page where people can go to provide comments. Mr. Rajaram added that he will reach out to Orlando for survey content.

Mr. Poole expressed concern with budget constraints and suggested asking the Commission for additional funding. He stated that the committee needs an outside professional to assist with developing the business plan. In-depth discussion ensued on public input forum criteria, outreach and implementation. Consensus was to have a plan and process in place by the end of the year.

Mr. Rajaram stated that the city currently has some applications in place that could be considered part of a smart city and presented a slide listing the applications: automated meter reading, security cameras, open data portal, online services, weather stations, EOC application, drone, GIS data, government transparency suite (Granicus), virtual and hybrid meetings. Mr. Naylor added that the committee should consider what the major data consumers have that the city doesn't. He stated that Rollins College has done some projects that the city could model from. Further discussion was held on the need for an expert to assist moderate and set a timeline for the action plan, water/sewer infrastructure, electricity and water use monitoring sensors, the city's new utility billing system.

After discussion, Mr. Rajaram will reach out to Orlando/Chris Castro regarding input on community engagement and survey questions and present his findings at the next meeting.

Action Items

None.

Board Comments

None.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Minutes approved the board on 11/04/2021.

/s/ Kim Breland