

**EAST AMWELL WEBSITE AND RESIDENTS COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE**  
**East Amwell Municipal Building, 1070 Route 202/31, Ringoes, NJ. 08551**

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 24, 2018 - 7:30 PM**

**1. Call to Order & Open Public Meeting Notice**

The Inaugural meeting of the Website and Resident Communications Committee was called to order at 7.40pm by Alison Castellano who read the following: In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, it was noted that this is the inaugural scheduled meeting of the East Amwell Website and Resident Communications Committee pursuant to the meeting notice published in the May 3, 2018 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. Notice of the meeting was filed on May 22, 2018 in the Township Clerk's office, emailed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the agenda was posted on the municipal bulletin board.

**2. Attendance**

**Present:**

Alison Castellano  
Richard Wolfe  
Erica Johanson  
Steve Ippoliti  
Chris Sobieski

**3. Inaugural Organization.**

A. Castellano stated that as per the Ordinance the committee can have 1 Class A member, up to 6 Class B members and 3 Youth members.

a. Election of Officers

- i. **Chairperson:** Alison Castellano was nominated by E. Johanson, second by R. Wolfe, all were in favor. A. Castellano was appointed Chairperson (Class B member).
- ii. **Vice Chairperson:** Chris Sobieski was nominated by R. Wolfe, second by A. Castellano, all were in favor. C. Sobieski was appointed Vice Chairperson (Class B member).
- iii. **Board Secretary:** R. Wolfe commented that the job was advertised publically and we have 3 applicants to review. We will recruit someone by the next meeting.

A.Castellano announced that the following are also to be appointed members of the committee: R. Wolfe (Township Committee Liaison - Class A member), Steve Ippoliti (Class B member), Erica Johanson (Class B member). We still have two available spaces on the committee.

b. 2018 Meeting Schedule:

A.Castellano advised that this committee would meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month. Cancellation will be advised through the appropriate channels if there is no updates to warrant a meeting.

4. **Acceptance of last month's meeting minutes:** n/a

5. **Additions to the Agenda:**

- a. A. Castellano - hearing none

6. **Open to the Public (for items not on the agenda):**

R. Wolfe motioned to open to the public, second by C. Sobieski, all were in favor. Members of the Public present were: Sue Poselt, Sande Katz, Matt Miller, Mark Castellano.

S. Poselt commented she is hoping the new website is going to be very user friendly. A.

Castellano replied that is exactly the plan. S. Ippoliti commented that we can have mini training sessions for residents if they need it. S. Katz thought that was a great idea.

Hearing no more public comments, R. Wolfe motioned to close to the public, second by C. Sobieski, all were in favor.

7. **New Business**

- a. Presentation of Civic Plus Contract and Statement of Works – A. Castellano ran through the key points of the contract and SOW. R. Wolfe is working through the contract with Nancy Canto for approval and payment. Once contract is signed and payment is made Civic Plus will provide a project timeline.
- b. Presentation by Richard Jones of Civic Plus – R. Jones made a remote presentation with an overview of our new site layout and advantages, highlighting the upgrades we will experience from our current site which is built on a 1997 platform. R. Wolfe commented he was very impressed by what he saw and E. Johanson is excited about the potential of having a really useful, intuitive website available to the community. R. Jones asked the committee if we intend to utilize an online payment function for paying property taxes. R. Wolfe and A. Castellano said doesn't have to be in place on day 1 but definitely something we would like to include. It was noted that the WiFi connection kept dropping, resulting in us losing the visual presentation numerous times. We had to settle for manually paging through on the laptop which was connected to the TV with R. Jones speaking on the phone on speaker. S. Ippoliti commented that the WiFi in the building is extremely slow and needs to be upgraded. A. Castellano asked C. Sobieski if he is willing to handle all social media communications (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc). C. Sobieski willingly agreed and said we have to take full advantage of these communication tools to expand our outreach to all ages of the community.
- c. Matt Miller – Live Streaming Demo – M. Miller set up his camera equipment in the main meeting room, connected to his pc in the small meeting room so we could watch R. Wolfe talking on the dais live. Everything worked well: we could see and hear him clearly. M. Miller is volunteering to do this for every Township Committee going forward. A. Castellano thanked him for stepping up to help and said we will trial this at the next TC meeting using a small test group to provide feedback as to the quality from home via mobile phone and/or pc. We will go live with the broadcasting of the livestream through YouTube once we have ironed out any kinks.

**Open to the Public:** A. Castellano motioned to open to the public to be included in (d) Discussion, second by R. Wolfe, all were in favor. S. Ippoliti praised Richard Jones (Civic

Plus) for being extremely helpful and responsive with working through the contract requirements. R. Wolfe likes the idea that residents will be able to communicate issues/concerns to the township (for example a tree being down, power outage etc) through the website. R. Wolfe asked M. Miller whether the meeting recordings will stay on YouTube. M. Miller replied yes and will be listed as historic meetings with the date. R. Wolfe stated that the township is not obligated to provide video coverage of meetings, only audio however this is a great thing to offer the residents if they cannot physically attend the meeting. S. Katz asked if we considered any other vendors. A. Castellano said she did extensive research online and Civic Plus came up as a widely used vendor for municipalities (the presentation states they have over 2600 local government partners across the U.S). She advised everyone to take a look at Hopewell Township's site as it is one of Civic Plus' clients. R. Wolfe said he did also reach out to City Connections (our current provider) however their technology cannot compete. S. Ippoliti added that from a technical perspective Civic Plus is so much more advanced. S. Katz also asked if we will get any money back from an early termination of contract with City Connections. R. Wolfe said he suspects not. R. Wolfe stated we will look into having some kind of launch event open to the whole community. A. Castellano mentioned that we will reach out to residents (via the tax mailer) to send in their own photos of East Amwell to be included on the home page. S. Poselt commented that she liked the idea of being able to pay her taxes online.

A.Castellano noted that S. Katz seemed very enthusiastic about the new website and asked her if she would consider joining the committee. S. Katz said she would think about it and get back to A. Castellano.

8. **Adjournment:** R. Wolfe motioned to adjourn, second by C. Sobieski, all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9.05pm.