

## Digital Communications Advisory Committee (DCAC) Report to the January 2022 Town Board

The DCAC met on Friday, 7 January 2022, via Zoom. Members Betsy Albert and Nadja Palenzuela were not able to attend. Members Doug Craig, Iona Fromboluti Wirls and Joyce Thompson worked through the agenda.

### Process for Website Postings

All official town information shall be sent to Town Clerk, Cheryl Rogers, for final authorization and submission to the Town Webmaster. That includes but is not limited to items authorized by the Town Board such as Public Notices, and all board and committee meeting schedules, venues, agendas, reports and minutes.

### Process for Website Development

Prior to the meeting, Nadja suggested that we now have a website that allows us to work through and implement new ideas and features. Members present agreed. They can be developed by the DCAC into a proposal that includes a description, an implementation plan and the authorization process. The proposal would then be sent to the Town Board for review / modification / rejection or approval.

Some ideas for Town Board consideration at this time are:

- Installation of an Information Alert Banner on the website Home Page for items such as Court Closings that are time-sensitive and of interest to more than just town residents. Time sensitive alerts pertaining to Taghkanic residents only, such as a town road closing could go to the TGazette for delivery to a recipient's inbox.

Given that the latest three TGazette postings are automatically linked to the home page of the website, there is redundancy in some cases and that can be an advantage. This Information Alert feature was used for the court closing last week. With Town Board approval this feature can become an integrated capability.

Hopefully, as people begin to use the website, this type of feature will help to drive broader usage of the both the site and the TGazette.

- Posting Important Town-wide Information such as the Road Repair Plan (284) and alterations to that plan as it is modified throughout the year.
- Installation of a Frequently Asked Questions section to provide answers to commonly asked questions. Taking examples from other town websites, those questions could be along the line of: "Where can I find a link to the Tax Assessment Roll?", "How do I apply for a building or zoning-related permit?", "Who should I call to report that I am planning to have a controlled burn?" or "How can we get a lower speed limit on my road?".

This feature could also provide the option to ask a question. The question would go to the Town Clerk and from her to the appropriate department, board or committee for the answer. The response would then be sent to the Clerk for editing, authorization and subsequent posting.

If a lot of questions begin to be the norm, it would become necessary to establish an editorial committee to relieve the monitoring / editing work from the Town Clerk.

After talking through these ideas, it has become clear that the development of the Town Website is an evolutionary process. We now have the capability to add features and experiment with what makes sense for Taghkanic. If the total of popular activities / features becomes too complex, it would then be necessary to look at a different website design. For now, the DCAC recommends that we work with what we have and build an understanding of what else would benefit the town.

Three other topics were discussed briefly:

- The hybrid meeting is fast becoming a regular requirement for town meetings and the DCAC members agree that after there is no longer a virus keeping people away from gatherings and meetings, it will be important to offer virtual attendance as a convenience to our residents. Betsy Albert has contacted a neighbor whose profession is video events and he will help us develop a plan for better video and audio coverage of town board and committee meetings in Town Hall with equipment that can become part of Town Hall meeting equipment.
- The DCAC is interested in knowing whether the town has a need for a database that could help reduce the cost of mailings.

Finally, the Hosting Service for the website provides a variety of statistics for website activity, such as the number of visitors to the site and which pages are viewed per day or per month. We will use this information to monitor the level of resident engagement with the website as the year progresses.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Thompson, Member  
Digital Communications Advisory Committee