

## Public Relations

On 4/6/19 Kerry White and Ben Lawton met with James Goodwin, Leicester Resident; Jeff Schumann, Salisbury Board alternate; Jay Michael, LDFLA Liason and Chip Paison, Leicester Resident; Mike Blaisdell, Board member was absent but helped to organize the agenda for the meeting and may want to continue to participate in the group. This group of individuals would like to form a committee to work with and assist the BLSG with Public Relations tasks. The board can look at this formation of people as a committee or as volunteers for the BLSG or both or in some other capacity that I have not identified.

The board may appoint a special committee unless it is otherwise outlined in your bylaws. The board can appoint a chairman of the committee and has the power to fill any vacancy. It is okay to have none members on a special committee per: Page 474 of Robert's Rules of Order 10<sup>th</sup> edition. The committee would have an obligation to report to the board at specified times and the board would outline the tasks and duties of the committee. The board may want to consider appointment of such a committee with end dates that can be renewed.

For a volunteer "program" the PR representative or some other designated person would coordinate the duties of the volunteers. The PR person with direction from the board would develop a Public Relations program and would then utilize the volunteers to full fill the components of the program.

There are certainly other options that can be developed, the board may have ideas for this. Both options have pros and cons, the special committee may have a reduced cost element, but may have the consequence of having well meaning individuals one step removed from the actual work that is completed on a daily basis. This could be alleviated with having a staff person on the special committee for input, and a slot could be designated for such a person. The volunteer program allows the board to have a little more control over the program in that they are directing thru either a PR person or some other designee to develop, manage and coordinate the volunteer efforts. Employing a PR person in this capacity has a higher cost than the special committee. The board would need to make a decision about budget costs. There are probably grants for developing a volunteer program. At this time, the board is fortunate to have a group of people who are skilled and have strengths in public relations. It is my opinion that a committee or program should not be developed around the people that are currently available, but on the basis of what is needed because people come and go.

The group talked about a range of issues and I will outline what was discussed below and then I will outline what the group of people would like to assist the BLSG with.

We discussed the following topics:

World Health Organization and some of their current recommendations.

The need for Education and Outreach within the Member towns, including education about the products that are used and products that they can use, source reduction, what residents can do to reduce mosquito habitat around their own homes. We talked about tires, the BLSG staff

participated in a field trip a couple of years ago to a tire warehouse in NY that has a tire wall cutter. At that time it was about \$2/tire and the state and the insect control districts did not identify a funding source to assist with large scale tire usage within the agricultural community. It is certainly something that people are continuing to talk about and thinking about resolutions for.

There was discussion about what the district is now, which is a nuisance mosquito control district and developing recognition for what it does. There was discussion about the vector component and the availability of funding dependent on its defined mission. What does the District want its image to be? Ben shared some substantive information and there was discussion about having a place on the website to add this. There was also discussion about utilizing social media with each outlet directing individuals back to the BLSG website.

There was a discussion about sampling, larviciding and the costs associated with these activities.

There was discussion of AG/ANR and their relationship to us.

Discussion about the budget.

The group felt like this is a great opportunity right now to get things out sooner than later. Should there be references to the lawsuit? What do we need from this group? They are available to do research for us, gather data, read through literature.

The group asked about distributing information weekly on performance, like “The Buzz” that Gary Meffee used to write for the district.

What papers should be utilized? The Brandon Reporter, Addison Independent, Rutland Herald, Sams Good News among others.

Jay has a lot of ideas for education and outreach topics for local newspapers including what does it mean to be a municipality? Regulatory information for BLSG, The importance of having people on the board, General stories like how are decisions made to make a treatment, maybe a story about a night in the spray truck (spooky)... What is that experience like? What are the responsibilities of the spray truck driver? There is a lot going on while driving the truck.

Events, it would be great to have a ten minute presentation that could be given, like the event that we had at LDFLA picnic, Fairs, the Brandon Parade, Maybe have a banner that can be placed on a truck for a parade. They can be active with front porch forum, or with social media, they can manage a specific site, it should be updated every third day.

Discussion about having posters made for store fronts, trail heads. Some trail heads require special permission, municipal buildings, town websites and offices, town reps could monitor their own town offices. Discussion about brochures and also that there is a cost for all of these items.

Opt out discussion. Jay has a suggestion for how it is written, a couple of people may have been confused by the process.

Jay offered to speak to Angelo from the Addison Independent to seek regular placement in the newspapers, something different than “The Buzz” Maybe a weekly update like the towns have.

Opt in/Opt out discussion

Suggestion about an article in the paper about opting out.

Discussion about Bees and PR

Discussion about hiring Kaleb to map out the wetland areas with photos, specifically the areas that the District treats.

In closing, the people that participated in the meeting are very enthusiastic about assisting with Public Relations activities. They understand that the board makes the decision about what tasks are completed or pursued. Public Relations is very important and the key questions in my prior presentation should be determined when developing a program for the board. What do you want your image to be? Who are you now, and do you have goals for the future? What are the current strengths and weakness of the District and how can any weakness be reconciled? If the board provides this information to me and the vehicle for which to pursue it, committee, volunteer component, or other I can write a proposal for you based on those decisions. A public relations program that is not well structured can become a detriment to the district.