MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 20, 2026 COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Anderson, Geri Denton, Lauren Schmidt, Diane Smith, Kyle Hollasch, Seth Hickey, Steve Butzel and Karen Richard

At 9:03am Joe opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the September minutes. Kyle motioned to approve the September 22 minutes. Geri seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Joe began the meeting by asking Seth to review the website analytics. Seth reported that he and Lauren had recently reviewed the data. The most frequently accessed item had been pages generating 404 errors; after sorting them by department and notifying page owners, only five of roughly thirty errors remain. He also noted an unusually high amount of overseas traffic, likely from bots seeking personal information, and the group agreed to ask Revize whether visits from other countries can be blocked. Lauren reviewed what users click on most: the homepage leads, followed by the calendar, Assessing, Town Clerk, DPW/Transfer Station, Stratham Hill Park, and Parks & Recreation. The group discussed updating the homepage seasonally to highlight timely topics.

Lauren suggested adding Microsoft Clarity for broader analytics. She also discussed social media progress and noted that while the new templates work well, the Town Clerk's office should have a dedicated template, which she will create. The team aims to convert more non-followers into followers and recommends adding a prominent "follow the Town" button to the newsletter. She also recommended incorporating brief video reels. It was suggested Diane lead that effort. Instagram and Facebook accounts are linked but the Instagram login needs to be located. We will resolve the issue before the next meeting.

Lauren proposed refreshing the Facebook cover photo and suggested a community photo contest requiring entrants to follow the Town page.

Geri raised a technical issue with the newsletter where images do not appear unless users click to download them. Including newsletter information with tax bills was ruled out due to an RSA and labor concerns.

Seth will review Mailchimp data to determine which newsletter items attract the most clicks.

Kyle mentioned seeing the signs at the park about the two new ordinance amendments and noted that several residents were surprised by the changes and unaware of the process behind them. He explained to them that the amendments had been discussed extensively in public forums. This prompted him to consider better ways to keep residents informed about town matters. He suggested using AI to produce a concise summary of the newsletter and offered to create a sample, with the goal of increasing engagement and reducing surprises for the community.

Steve shared that the library is focusing on many of the same goals as this group, with its two-year strategic plan centered on increasing patron engagement. Geri asked how the Town and the library might strengthen collaboration and whether communication between the two is as effective as it could be. One idea discussed was including sign-up links for each other's newsletters within both publications. Kyle added that the Chrome extension he uses is extremely helpful—when he looks up a book to purchase, it automatically shows whether the library already has it available.

Diane expressed her support for creating short, quick videos, noting that this type of content is more likely to capture people's attention. She added that they plan to hold off on sending any mailings until after the holidays.

The conversation shifted to the digital display in the library. Joe asked whether people pay attention to it, and Steve explained that while it drew interest at first, its impact has diminished as people have gotten used to it. The library is exploring ways to recapture attention. Joe then asked Diane to look into the possibility of installing a similar display in the Municipal Center. The group also discussed the longer-term idea of adding an outdoor digital sign at the Municipal Center, though it appears a town ordinance may prohibit digital displays, and the project is not budgeted for this year. Geri noted that Greenland has a tasteful digital sign, and observed that while the DPW and Police digital signs are effective, they are limited in how much information they can show and are not very visually appealing.

The group agreed to staff a table at the upcoming General Election. Plans include featuring a large sign, QR codes for the Town and Library newsletters and Facebook page, physical sign-up sheets, sample newsletters, and a calendar of upcoming events such as Veterans Day and the cookie competition.

It was decided to hold regular meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 9:00am. Next meeting will be Tuesday, November 17 at 9:00am.

At 10:16am Steve motioned to adjourn. Geri seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard