

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2015

Subject: Special “GIS for Municipalities” Board of Directors Teleconference

Board Members Present: Mickey Dietrich, Susan Nixon, Julia O'Brien, Julie Tolar, Pete Walsemann, Carol Zollweg

Committee Chairs and Officers Present: Michelle Debyah, Christa Hay

Guests Present: Alan Leidner

Not Present: Rich Quodomine

Minutes: The teleconference meeting began at 11:01 AM.

Susan called a special meeting of the Board of Directors to discuss Alan’s efforts to obtain funding for the GIS for Municipalities project. There has been no official contact from the grantor as of yet, but Susan wants the Board informed before the Association commits to receiving any potential funding.

Over the past two years Alan has teamed up with Jim McConnell, current Assistant Commissioner for GIS with the NYC Office of Emergency Management, and Wendy Dorf, former manager for the DEP water main project and base map project. They were frustrated by the lack of familiarity with GIS, and wanted to secure funding to further GIS and foster projects that improve quality of infrastructure data, research funding, GIS education, and archived maps resulting from 9/11. They met with Mary McCormick, President of the Fund for the City of New York, and formed the New York Geospatial Catalysts organization, which Mary agreed to make a "Partner Organization" of the Fund for the City of NY (FCNY). FCNY has been around for decades and is among the most influential NGO's in NYC, often working closely with the City Administration on many initiatives in the public interest. Mary has offered \$10,000.00 to the NYS GIS Association to help “have-not” municipalities acquire GIS.

FCNY is an independent entity that chooses to work with NYC often, but not exclusively. Alan stated that the only requirement of the funding is that the Association does something that is really effective.

Alan stressed the need to involve the State (Bill Johnson) and the GAC in this effort, as well as the regional coordinators (especially in regard to the survey to identify “have-not” municipalities).

Mickey wondered if a municipality with a public works department employee dabbling with free GIS software would still be considered “have-not”. Alan said that would be up to the Association to define.

Mickey also had concerns about whether a government employee accepting funding could lead to an ethics violation, and would a government employee need to step down from the Association to accept funds. Alan suggested checking with local or NYS lawyers. Mickey said he might also check with the JCOPE Board, he just wants to be sure everything is proper. Susan said everything will be transparent.

Possible uses for the funding:

- Data repository

- Education

- In person strategic meeting

- Pay for advisor/consulting time

- Intro to GIS training (basic)

- Mentoring

- Project based introduction – ask what they want to accomplish and show them how GIS can do it

- Inventory of projects and tools to accomplish

- Presentations at annual meetings of Highway Superintendents, NYS Towns, Village Mayors, etc

- Recipients of assistance need to do a presentation to assist others/give back

- “First adopters first” – can’t solve everything at once, others will see their success and come in

Julie said the GAC is already talking about how to move the data sharing cooperative to an open data format. The State is big on open data right now, and the GAC suggested the Association might want to focus more on supporting open data than the “have-not” project. Mickey pointed out that open data doesn’t help communities that don’t have GIS.

Communities that are dedicated and willing to commit time and effort should be identified. Free training doesn’t do any good if it is not put to use.

Some municipalities balk when they see the high cost of software, but they are not aware of the benefits. Perhaps if they get started with a free package and realize the benefits, when they want to start taking their GIS program further they may be willing to invest in software.

Questions:

- What are the expectations of the Association?

- What is the funding process?

- What is the Treasurer’s process (keeping funds separate)?

Everyone should come up with questions and project ideas and send them to Susan for consolidation and circulation. The Board will meet again, perhaps in person sometime around June, to develop a strategy.

A motion was made by Julia to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Carol. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:56 AM.