Open Providence Commission for ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Report of Findings & Recommendations of the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability

January, 2013

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Welcome from Mayor Angel Taveras, City Council President Michael Solomon and Majority Leader Seth Yurdin

It is with great pleasure that we write to introduce this report of findings and recommendations from the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability. We hope you find the ideas and recommendations included in this report as exciting as we do.

Nearly a year ago, we created – with the support of community advocacy organizations, government watchdog groups and the unanimous support of the Providence City Council – a fifteen member commission tasked with studying the current state of transparency in Providence city government and issuing specific, actionable recommendations to improve accountability to residents.

We did this because we strongly believe that Providence city government belongs to the residents of Providence and that we elected officials are temporary custodians of the offices we hold. We believe that government operates best when it is transparent in practice, honest with constituents, data-driven in its management and ethical in its operations. Indeed, we concur with United States Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis that "sunlight can be the most powerful of disinfectant."

Consisting of local leaders in the public and private sector, the Open Providence Commission held public forums, visited neighboring cities and spent countless hours researching, drafting and debating these important issues. Their work is reflected in this document, which contains recommendations both big and small and both short- and long-term, but all intended for the same purpose of realizing a more accountable and transparent city government.

We thank the Commission for their time and energy on this project, and we thank you – the residents of the City of Providence – for reading their work, considering these issues and continuing to hold elected officials accountable to their constituents.

Sincerely yours,

Angel Taveras	Michael Solomon	Seth Yurdin
Mayor	*President, Providence City Council*	*Majority Leader, Providence City Council*

Introduction from Chairperson Marion

Welcome to the final report of the Open Providence Commission for Accountability & Transparency and thank you for our interest in this document.

As noted above, this Commission was created unanimously by the Providence City Council and tasked, by resolution, with studying the current state of transparency in Providence City government and making specific, actionable recommendations designed to strengthen city government's accountability to residents. This is a large task for any Commission, and I believe the work included here, while a strong first step, is by no means an exhaustive response to this mandate.

In my day job, I serve as the Executive Director of Common Cause, Rhode Island. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded in 1970 by John Gardner as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest. Common Cause strives to strengthen our democracy by empowering our members, supporters and the general public to take action on critical policy issues. Now with nearly 400,000 members and supporters and 35 state organizations, Common Cause remains committed to honest, open and accountable government, as well as encouraging citizen participation in democracy.

I am also fortunate to be a long-time resident of the City of Providence. As such, the chance to join and lead this Commission provided me with an opportunity to apply my professional passion to the issues and City I personally care most about. I was humbled by the opportunity and am thankful to the Mayor and the Council for this opportunity.

In the course of producing this document, the Commission received testimony from the public and invited a series of experts to address the Commission and its committees. There were three committees, one each focusing on "current practices," "best practices" and "public engagement". A public hearing was held at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, the minutes of which appear verbatim in the appendix to this report. The Commission also conducted a survey of all City department directors, the results of which appear throughout this document and in their unaltered form in the appendix. A report of the "current practices" committee can be found at the Commission's website.

This report is primarily the work of the Commissioners whose biographies appear at the end of this document. Working with them has been a pleasure. I also wish to thank the Rhode Island School of Design for generously hosting our public forum, Boston's Office of New Urban Mechanics for hosting a delegation of the Commission and Brown University student Maria Jimenez who dedicated her summer as a Fellow in the office of Mayor Angel Taveras to staffing this commission and researching many of the best practices. I also thank the staff of Mayor Angel Taveras and the Providence City Council for their commitment and professionalism. I would specifically like to thank Toby Shepherd, Deputy Director of Policy in the Office of the Mayor for his extensive help in drafting this final report. While the Commissioners and city staff indicated here deserve the credit for this final product, I take responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies contained herein.

Executive summary

This report evaluates and suggests specific measures for strengthening current practices related to transparency, open government and accountability to constituents in Providence city government. Focusing on four overlapping key levers of change – access to vital information, better informed decision making processes, the use of information technology to facilitate greater civic participation and the organizational changes necessary to foster a renewed culture of transparency – this report aspires to propose a roadmap for making Providence a national leader in accountability and transparency at the local level.

Specifically, this report finds:

- Residents' ability to access information, whether it be the vote of a City Council person on an important piece of legislation, the minutes from a recent meeting of the City's Retirement Board, or performance data related to mattress removal, should be strengthened through new reporting processes and better use of information technology.

- Participatory processes can be deliberately restructured to maximize constituent input, with guidance from practices piloted and adopted in other cities.

- Providence can more effectively make use of modern information technology – web and mobile applications, forward facing performance measurement, and the development of a functionally robust citizen dashboard – to directly engage with city residents.

Finally, the commission concludes that Providence needs continued leadership from its top elected and administrative officials to continually reinforce a culture of openness and accountability to residents.

For more information on the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability, visit: www.providenceri.com/open-government.

Information Accessibility

In its review of the City website, practices related to notification of public meetings, and disclosure processes related to meeting minutes, elected officials, departmental information, the budget and other information relating to public affairs, the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability ("Open Providence Commission") has identified several ways to ensure that access to critical information can be strengthened for Providence residents to access in a timely fashion.

First, the Commission found that meeting minutes for boards and commissions, public agencies and other public bodies are not always subject to uniform and standard rules regarding transcription, recording or posting. While the requirements of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) are met for City Council meetings, Providence residents have no easy way to review the individual votes of specific agenda items without reviewing the meeting minutes for a particular hearing, something none other than the most engaged of citizens would be likely to do. Additionally, the Commission found that while other cities and towns post draft or unapproved minutes to the Secretary of State's website, Providence does not. Following a Council meeting, the Commission recommends making available these "action minutes" as soon as practicable. The Commission recommends the **creation of an online vote tracking tool**, particularly for the City Council and its committees. With such a system, votes can be inputted into an online database that is viewable, searchable and filterable and a subscription model can be used to update followers when subsequent votes are taken on the same legislation. One simple format could be an opt-in email alert system. In such a system, residents could register to "follow" certain issues or specific pieces of legislation and receive timely updates on their progress. Or, the office of the City Clerk could assign individuals who staff Council and committee meetings to report key votes in real time via the City website or a social media account.

Moreover, the Commission found there is no easy way to review the minutes of other important public bodies, including City Council sub- and special committees and other public boards and commissions. The Commission recognizes that with current staffing and resource constraints, it is not feasible to recommend the office of the City Clerk adopt policies of full transcription and publication for the meeting minutes of *every* public body. However, a narrower scope of information – members present or absent, key votes or other actions taken or not taken, proposed changes made or adopted, measures approved or rejected – could be summarized and published in a timely fashion for public bodies beyond the Council. For example, while it may be overly onerous to expect the minutes of Providence's Board of Park Commissioners meetings be transcribed and published in forty-eight hours, the recording secretary of the Board can record and publicize votes on important "off-leash" policies. The same is true for the City's myriad public boards and commissions: the Board of Licenses, the Board of Contract & Supply, the Workforce Investment Board, and others. Additionally, the Commission notes that individuals can call the office of the City Clerk to request specific information on meeting and hearing outcomes.

Moreover, the recording secretaries of these boards, with the appropriate training, can use new technologies to communicate Board developments with City residents. The City has recently announced the creation a new social media policy that includes a single "City Hall" Facebook and Twitter account that aggregates information across City departments, board and agencies. Recording secretaries of each Board and Commission, with the support and training of the office of the City Clerk, **can forward important information for dissemination to the managers of these accounts and use social media for keeping City residents apprised of Board actions.** Additionally, the Commission finds that **all meeting minute information could be consolidated under a single "Meeting Minutes" link** on the City's webpage that allows users to navigate to publicly posted minutes for multiple bodies from one location.

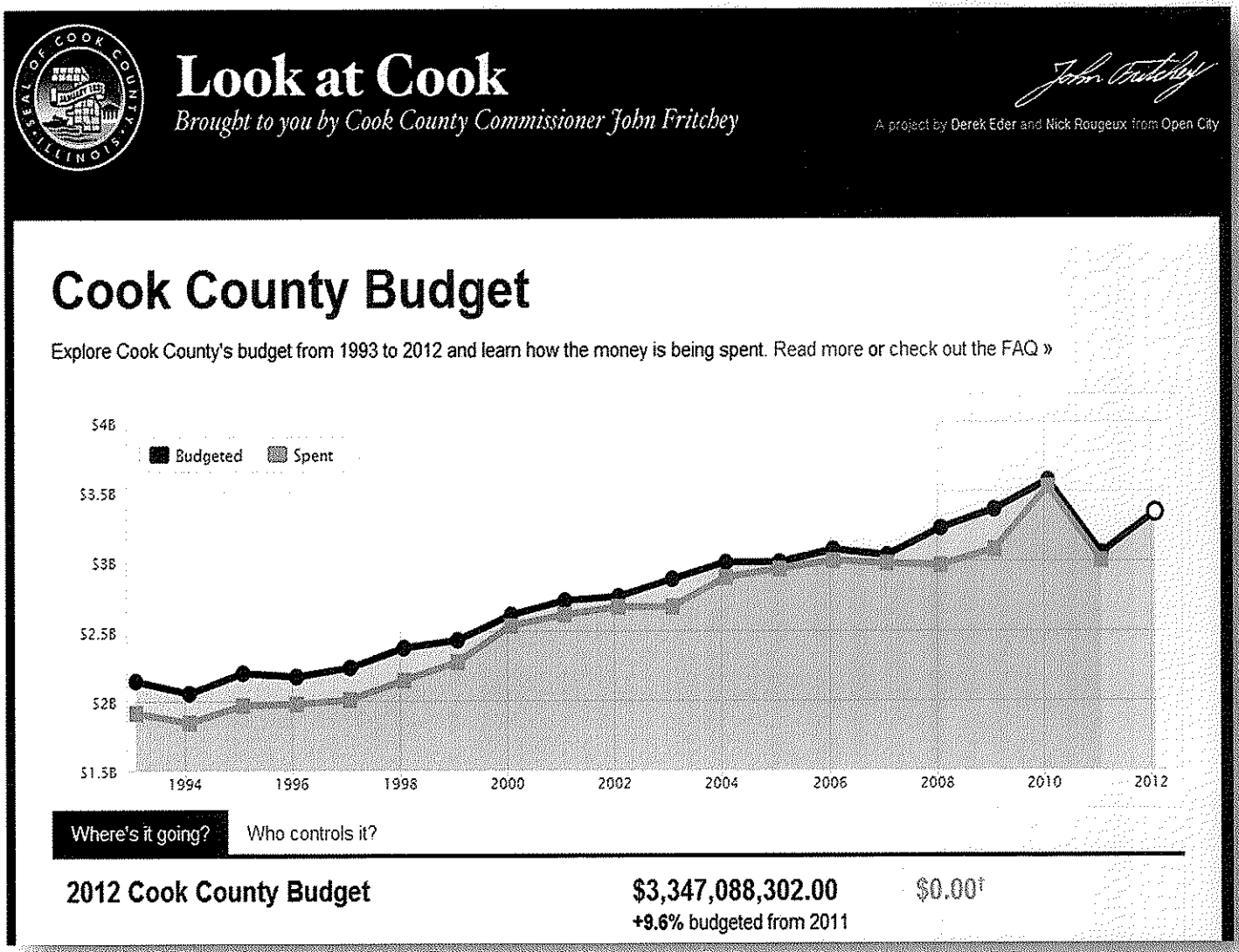
In reviewing this policy, a member of the Commission expressed concern regarding the consolidation of social media accounts and argued in favor of a decentralized social media policy. Additionally, it is the belief of the Commission that social media should not be an exclusive channel for communication with citizens, but rather a complimentary one. Public information pushed out through social media should simultaneously, as much as is reasonably possible, also be placed on the City's website. And while the Commission recommends maintaining the city's website as the primary vehicle for online constituent interaction, the city could also explore the possibility of dedicated social media addresses for specific City services. Citizens should have the option of choosing between information that is focused on particular City services and/or department, or an aggregated account with all City notices.

When surveyed, two thirds of Providence department directors indicated that they would use a centralized social media channel to publicize relevant information from their departments. When asked what types of training, support or guidance directors would need to be most effective in using social media, responses included "basic training," "general guidelines" and "access and limitations of what can go on it."

The Commission also found that information regarding the composition, function, rules and regulations of boards, commissions and other public bodies are not publicly available. Indeed, the City's directory of boards and commissions (http://www.providenceri.com/boards-commissions) simply links to the code of ordinance's authorizing language. The Commission recommends **enhancing the City's directory of boards and commissions** to include each board's composition, function, rules and regulations. Board and commission nominating processes can be conducted transparently and electronically via an openly accessible, online nominating form. Meeting minutes, agendas, votes and other pertinent information should be centrally stored in the previously mentioned "Meeting Minutes" link. Further, in reflection of the important work that the City's many boards and commissions do, the Commission recommends more publicly highlighting the existence of the directory.

Beyond communications & minute transcription of public bodies, **the Commission recommends live video streaming of full City Council meetings** as well as council subcommittee meetings dealing with the City's budget. Other municipalities partner with free web-hosting services like UStream and Youtube to

The Look at Cook web portal allows users to visualize various expenditures and revenue sources.



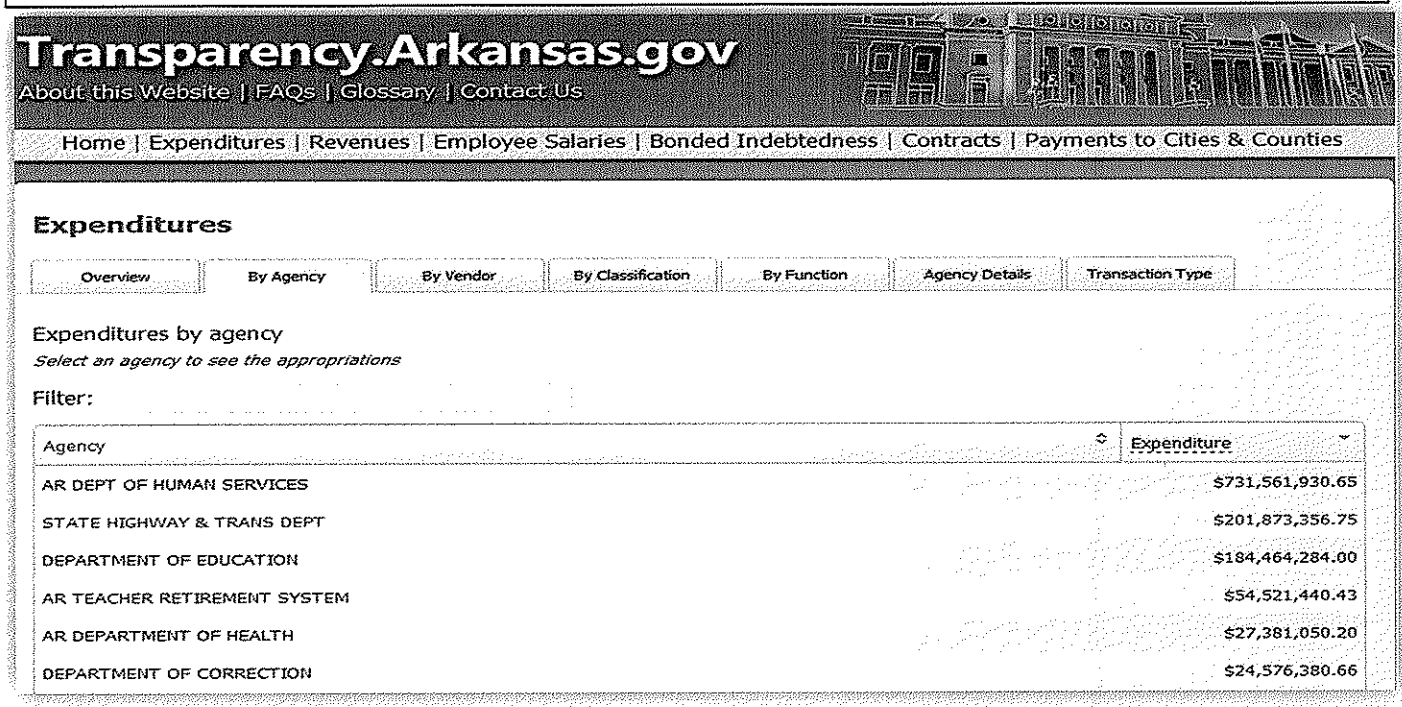
accomplish this task. If free services are not feasible to provide timely live video streaming, the Commission recommends working with existing vendors or seeking new vendors it has identified who are able to provide the service. Given current fiscal restraints we encourage the first path if possible. Given the volunteer role of the Commission, and its lack of fiduciary power, we did not contact vendors directly.

The Commission also identified several areas in which access to the City's financial practices could be strengthened. While Providence has publicly posted budgets from the prior fiscal year only, a review of best practices from other cities reveals that other municipalities **display budget information from up to ten years prior**. Disclosing this information more readily on the City's website could have been a helpful communications tool as City government worked to close record budget deficits.

The City should consider **developing tools to help residents interpret budgetary information**. Other municipalities have developed dynamic, "do it yourself" visualizations of financial data in aggregate and detailed form. For example, Cook County, Illinois has a sophisticated "Look at Cook" website where budget expenditures and revenues can be explored in an interactive manner . A similar, perhaps somewhat simpler tool to help Providence residents interpret the city budget could be helpful in communicating and engaging residents in important issues of public finances.

Similarly, cities and states across the nation, including RI.gov, have adopted "**online checkbooks**" that communicate cash-flow information in near real-time and the Commission recommends that Providence do the same. These websites frequently display expenditures, revenues, employee salaries, bonded indebtedness and transactions by department, vendor, category, function and transaction type. Best practices include maintaining historical data in common format to enable ability to compare to multiple years to visualize trends. The Commission met with representatives of the vendor that manages RI.gov and who expressed interest in assisting the City in developing an online checkbook similar to what is available from the State. The Commission encourages further collaboration with the City to make this a reality. A strong example is Transparency.Arkansas.gov, a snapshot of which is included above.

The Arkansas Transparency portal hosts this online checkbook of statewide financial information.



The Commission is aware that another review panel – The Minority and Women's Business Enterprise Procurement Task Force – recently recommended the City implement an **online vendor registration system** so that prospective contractors can receive information to bid on City projects online, rather than physically enter City Hall. The recommendations are not only in the best interest of Minority and Women Business

Enterprises, but also endorse full disclosure and municipal transparency. The Commission is also aware that Providence has recently joined other Rhode Island cities and towns in participating in the Rhode Island Municipal Vendor Bidding & Notification System and **encourages continued integration with this system**. An alternative system to be further studied is a "reverse auction" system, an internet-based process used to buy supplies and services whereby the sellers of the supplies or services being auctioned anonymously bid against each other until time expires and until the governmental body determines from which sellers it will buy based on the pricing obtained during the process. This system has characteristics of both an open and closed auction: competition and anonymity.

The Commission received testimony that Access to Public Records Act (APRA) requests have, historically, not always been fulfilled in a timely manner. The Commission recognizes that, over the course of the Commission's work, the City created a single, simple online request form for APRA requests – an important step forward in making requests easier to file and track. When surveyed, all department directors indicated that APRA requests are forwarded to the City Solicitor's office, a positive indication of existing internal procedures regarding the timely resolution of such requests. The Commission also recognizes that recent changes to APRA law have mandated and the City of Providence has complied with posting procedures for obtaining records on the City's website. Similarly, the Commission found that submitting permits, applications and other forms to City agencies almost invariably requires users to download forms in Portable Document Format ("PDF") complete them by hand and mail or hand deliver them to the appropriate office. The Commission recommends the City investigate enhanced website functionality that would **allow users to complete these transactions electronically**.

And what happens to those forms once they are submitted? The Commission found that standard operating procedures for basic departmental functions are rarely available for public consumption, a reality that leads to the unfortunate perception – true or not – that City functions can be inconsistently applied. The Commission **strongly recommends the drafting and public posting of standard operating procedures for all constituent service, administrative processes**. In other words, residents should know when they report graffiti to whom their service request was routed, how it will be prioritized among other requests, the length of time similar requests typically take to fulfill and who they can contact for updates or more information. Additionally, residents should be able to view and publicly comment on *other* service requests. Similar processes from issuing dumpster permits to fulfilling tree pruning requests should be clear, consistently applied and publicly available for residents.

The Commission found that the City maintains multiple online calendars of public events, but lacks a central calendar that consolidates both events and public meetings. The Commission recommends **enhancing the calendar of the ProvidenceRI.com webpage** to include meetings of public bodies, boards and commissions as well as other relevant, timely information on street closures, restricted parking, events in public parks, etc. Email alerts, sms for existing events and also a subscription function for future events could be integrated into a larger system that includes news on City developments like traffic alerts and weather warnings.

Under the leadership of Commission member Professor Andrew Law, students at RISD have already begun the process of exploring how they might use their skills to advance an agenda of open government. The Commission recognizes that many citizens of Providence may not have regular access to the Internet. Therefore we encourage efforts to bridge the digital divide. One project, creating **a system that would allow a caller to access city websites via a telephone**, has already been tested. With the availability of free phones from Assurance Mobile, this is one solution to providing access to digital access for those who cannot otherwise access the Internet. Further collaboration with the City as Professor Law pursues that and other projects is highly recommended.

Finally, the Commission found that information on public officials, including their names, contact information and terms of service, is not always available online. A review of best practices from other municipal websites found standard information on public officials frequently made available to the public includes name, title, brief biography, phone number, party affiliation if relevant, email address, appointing official and term of service. The Commission recommends **the development of a comprehensive "person directory"**. A format could include a dynamic organizational chart, including external relationships to other governmental agencies and major vendors.

Recommendations:

Meetings & Agendas
(Owner: City Clerk)

- *Live-stream City Council and finance related Committee meetings on the city website*
- *Include supporting documentation with agendas online*
- *Minutes, including draft and/or unapproved minutes, should be posted on the Secretary of State's website. They should also be enabled to allow commenting, and should have a unique URL to reference*
- *Pending ordinances should be available in a central location, and historical changes to ordinances should be available and traceable to votes*
- *Consolidate meeting agendas, minutes, audio and video files in one central location for easy accessibility*
- *Develop reporting standards that communicate key information from all public bodies*
- *Maintain a central calendar of all upcoming public meetings: committees, subcommittees, boards, commissions, quasi-public agencies, etc. This calendar should allow users to subscribe to events and receive notification alerts.*
- *Deliberately schedule meetings with the maximization of constituent attendance, participation and engagement as a goal: avoid double booking, avoid mid-day time slots and consider rotating locations outside of City Hall. Summarize key votes and make them easily accessible via email, the City website and social media.*
- *Develop a VoIP hotline for residents to listen to audio information on a webpage and participate by leaving an audio comment, voting on an issue or requesting updates via an automated phone call or text message.*

Financial Practices
(Owners: Finance Director, Webmaster, Director of Purchasing)

- *Enable dynamic financial data visualization*
- *Produce an annual "guide to the City budget" in document and/or interactive form that defines technical terms, answers frequently asked questions, visually represents financial data and describes in narrative form the City's annual progress against measurable, financial goals.*
- *Establish an online web presence for city offices involved in public finance (the Controller, the Internal Auditor, the Treasurer, Purchasing and more) and include all relevant audits and comprehensive reports, with older information available and archived.Adopt an "online checkbook" so that City residents can review major expenditures, revenues and cash-flow information in near real-time.*
- *Continue integrating purchasing processes with the City's new vendor registration system, so businesses seeking City contracts can review and bid on all projects remotely, and make winning bid applications available online after the fact.*
- *Study the "reverse auction" method described above*

Permits, Zoning, and Departments
(Owners: Chief Information Officer, Director of Public Property, Director of Administration)

- *Continue to move all PDF applications for permits and licenses to an online submission format, with tracking availability and average wait times for various permits.*

Elected, Appointed & Administrative Officials
(Owner: City Clerk)

- *Provide a comprehensive list of all elected, appointed and administrative city officials, including historical appointments, with contact and biographical information for each.*

Participatory & Cooperative Processes

Because "open government" extends beyond the disclosure of votes and meeting minutes but also includes the processes by which decisions are made, the Open Providence Commission studied various current and best practices related to constituent engagement in participatory processes. Below, the Commission has identified several opportunities for increased participation and civic engagement, **including the adoption of interactive meeting agendas, participatory decision making processes, and the deliberate 'crowd-sourcing' of ideas, talent and funding for public projects.**

A review of best practices from other municipalities revealed that some cities not only post meeting agendas 48 hours in advance of a meeting, but enable residents to **comment on agenda items and submit commentary in advance of the meeting's commencement**. A relatively simple technological fix, this enhanced functionality expands a public meeting's ability to engage residents who cannot attend public meetings in person, **and provide input that may be useful to the public body in their public deliberations.**

Beyond providing input and commentary, other municipalities have found new ways to involve citizens directly in decision making processes in new and meaningful ways. For example, City Councilors from cities like New York City and Chicago have developed processes in which constituent led commissions and representatives from various organizations make important recommendations regarding the expenditure of funds already directed to local programs. While Providence's current resource constraints make the notion of citizen-commissions directing the spending of discretionary funds difficult to imagine, the process of high-level engagement in policymaking decisions is an important, recent development in municipal transparency and one that should be explored for Providence, and the Commission recommends that **City Councilpersons consider adopting similar processes for prioritizing projects eligible for individual ward account spending**.

Hackathons and City Camp: Case Studies in Civic Engagement and "Unconferences"

Cities across the nation have embraced the hackathon. A hackathon is an event in which computer programmers, designers, and project manager congregate for a specified period of time, ranging from 24 hours to a week, in order to collaborate on software and hardware projects and products. New York City held its first civic hackathon in 2011 with the purpose of reinventing their city website NYC.gov. Participants were given the task of redesigning and improving the city's official website portal in a 36-hour challenge. Programmers and designers alike rose to the challenge revamping the city's website in the following sectors: user interface, social, local, innovation, and judge's pick.

Raleigh, NC held City Camp Raleigh in June 2012 in a Government 2.0 competition for civic innovation. The unconference included early morning idea pitches in which the attendees favorite idea was nominated. Participants then broke up into teams to work on their idea's design to present for a final evaluation at the end of the unconference. The main goals of City Camp programs are to foster a community of government enthusiasts looking to build a brighter future by sharing insights, ideas, and innovative web solutions to obstacles to transparency and efficiency in the 21st century.

More generally, the Commission found Providence has yet to take advantage of crowd sourcing in the powerful ways that other municipalities have embraced. Crowd sourcing is a process of engaging the public in generating new ideas, solving discrete problems or funding specific City projects.

Cities can take advantage of hackathons, events in which programmers collaborative intensively on specific software related projects. With little more than accessible data sources, simple hardware and a guiding theme for problem solving, civic hackathons can – and do – produce mobile and web applications that help government better serve residents. Companies like Facebook and Google famously hold internal hackathons to encourage software engineers to experiment and test out innovative ideas that could potentially lead to the development of new products. With local institutions of higher education providing a pool of untapped programming talent, **Providence city government should explore how to take advantage of the potential of civic hackathons**.

Hackathons are occasionally included as part of longer "unconference" events, public forums that bring together local government officials, programmers, designers, citizens, journalists and others to share best practices, experiment

in web and mobile application development and foster communities of practices on the role of the information technology in government transparency.

Over twenty cities have hosted "City Camp" unconferences. In June of 2012, for example, the city of Raleigh, North Carolina hosted CityCamp Raleigh, an unconference described by the organizers as "three days of open sourced talks, workshops, and hands-on problem solving, to re-imagine the way the web, applications, technology, and participation will shape the future of Raleigh." Teams created tools like a mobile app alerting motorists when they've been towed and a mobile application that allows residents to better navigate local parks using GPS technology. The Commission recommends **pursuing a Providence City Camp**, as a collaboration between City government, local institutions of higher education and Providence's tech- and civic-hacker constituencies.

To best take advantage of hackathons or city camp conferences, **Providence can continue to embrace the practice of publicly disseminating non-sensitive City data**. Again, models exist from other cities: Washington D.C. (http://data.octo.dc.gov), San Francisco (http://datasf.org) and New York City (www.nyc.gov/datamine) supply public data sets produced by city agencies and other city organizations, often in application programming interface ("API") or in machine-readable formats. More on this topic appears in the Accountability, Culture and Communication section of this report.

Beyond hackathons and city camps, permanent online platforms exist to connect city residents interested in solving public problems with the City officials responsible for their management. Innocentive.com, for example, is a Boston-based information technology firm that allows public agencies, as well as private companies, to post specific "challenges" for its 200,000 users to solve for the chance of winning a cash prize. Using Innocentive.com, the City of Boston offered a $10,000 prize to the mathematician who could develop an algorithm that best predicted where future potholes might develop using data from its Street Bump mobile phone application. This example demonstrates the powerful capability of public officials to tap into local networks of willing and able civic-minded programmers to solve important municipal problems for nominal sums of money. With resource constraint now the norm rather than the exception, the Commission recommends that **Providence experiment with online crowdsourcing platforms** not only as a means of engaging talent outside of City Hall, but as a means of saving money, too.

Similar online platforms exist for residents to engage deliberatively in important planning processes. Community Plan It is one such model. Piloted in Boston, Community Plan It uses a game model where residents register and earn points and prizes in return for simulating the role of city planners and participating in planning activities. In return, city officials receive troves of information on community preferences and resident expectations. As Providence city officials make important decisions ranging from resource allocation to road repair, platforms like Community Plan It offer a virtual way (as opposed to the in-person process of participatory budgeting) for city officials to better engage residents.

Providence can take advantage of momentum that exists on the national level. The White House Open Data project, for example, exists to publicize government data in machine readable format for the express purpose of enabling entrepreneurs to create useful mobile and web applications. Cities.Data.Gov, a component of this work, is a federal initiative designed to showcase web and mobile applications that improve access to information on the local level. While currently limited to several major American cities, Providence – particularly with the support of local institutions of higher education – **could pioneer this work for mid-size American cities.**

Recommendations:

Crowd Sourcing for Better Engagement
(Owner: City Clerk, Webmaster, Chief Information Officer)

- *Enable online commenting on meeting agendas of any public body subject to the Open Meetings Act and ensure that comments submitted in advance are read into official meeting records*
- *Solicit the public for technical expertise by using online platforms like Innocentive to tap into local networks of civic programmers*

- *Use online platforms like Community Plan It to more deliberately engage residents in decision making processes*
- *Enhance the "contact us" experience by including new "live chat" functionality for immediate response for guidance.*

Hackathons & Unconferences
(Owner: Chief Information Officer)

- *Partner with Providence's institutions of higher education, civic advocacy groups and other local organizations to host iterative series of one-off civic hackathons as well as PVDCamp, a multi-day 'unconference' modeled after CityCamps elsewhere.*

Civic hackers at City Camp Raleigh collaborate to solve citywide challenges.

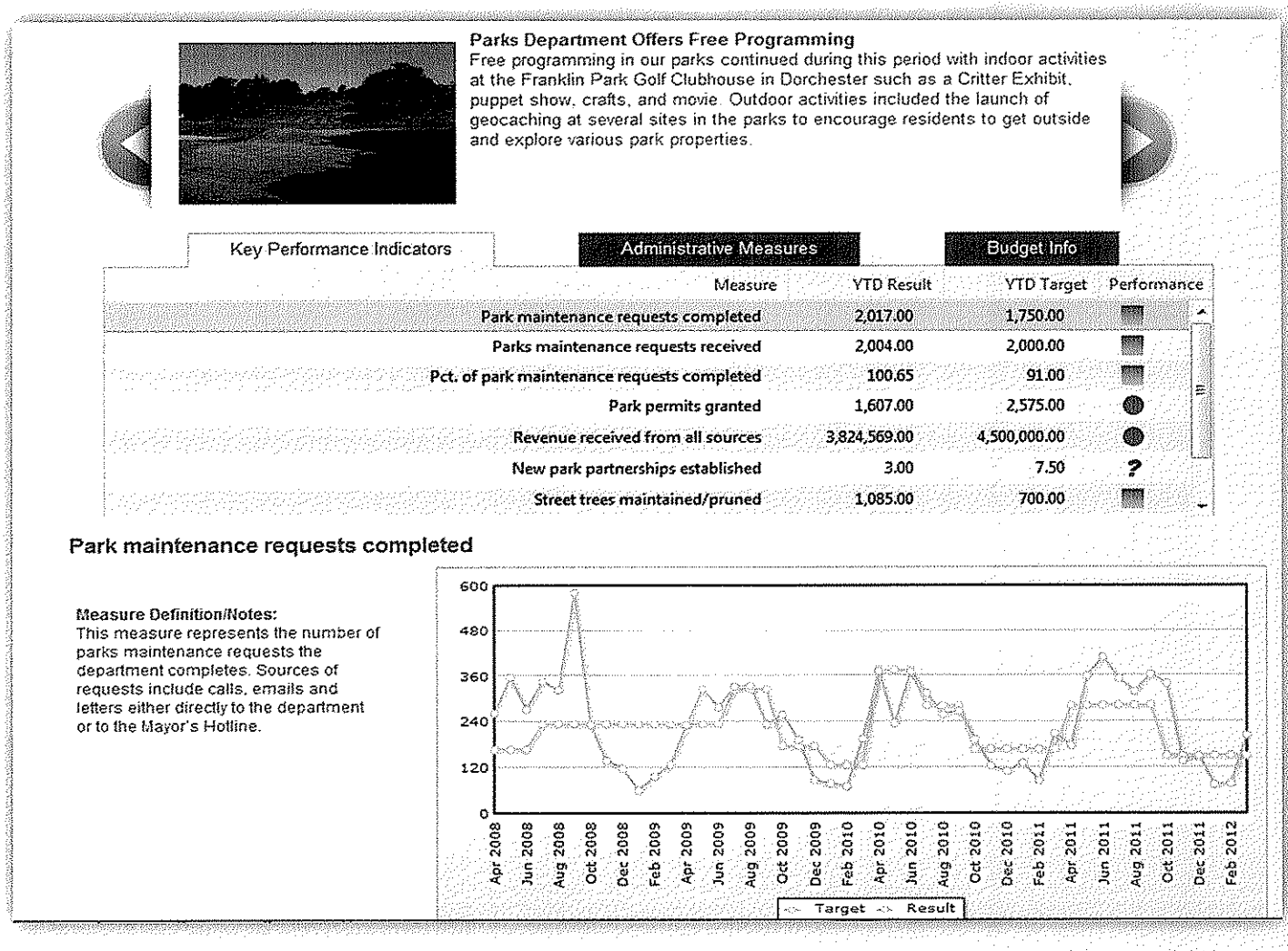
Technology & Collaboration

In its review of practices from other cities, organizations and advocacy organizations, the Commission finds that the City of Providence can strengthen its use of information technology to facilitate transparent, open and accountable government.

The resolution creating the Open Providence Commissions tasks this body with, among other things, "investigating current technologies and proposing the development of a state of the art citizen dashboard." Such a dashboard, as the Commission heard in various forums, would be a one-stop information hub for residents, businesses and visitors. Users with unique log-in account information could use the dashboard to pay taxes, water bills or parking tickets, look up information on a child's recent test scores, submit requests and (receive status updates) for tree pruning or sidewalk repair, and so on.

While the development of such a dashboard would likely require the investment of resources unavailable at this time, the **Commission recommends the pursuit of partnerships – with local institutions like RISD, national organizations like Code for America, other Rhode Island cities & towns – that could ultimately enable the development of this dashboard**.

Boston About Results displays departmental performance against specific, measurable metrics.



Commissioner James Silveria in his role as the City's Chief Information Officer, has published a request for proposal to create a data warehouse and data portal. The RFP for the data warehouse is written such that such a system will allow the City to gather information in a manner that may allow the City to create a citizens dashboard.

The RFP for the data portal published by the City's CIO includes the capability to create an API, and other advanced tools for outside developers who want to build tools to use City data. As the data portal is brought online, the City should explore the opportunity for hackathons and other forms of participation by the public in creating tools for city residents. Additionally, the Commission recommends that data published meet the "8 principles of Open Government Data," included here and detailed at OpenGovData.org.

The Commission also heard recommendations for the adoption of a forward-facing departmental performance dashboard. Rather than a tool for conducting city business, a performance dashboard would allow residents to review departmental performance against a series of key performance indicators. Here, best practices from other cities abound as well: Boston About Results, for example, is a publicly accessible performance measurement database that measures actual service delivery against publicly available performance goals in multiple areas of functionality. Whether it's measuring the year-to-date number of children using library cards in Boston Public Libraries against an annual target, or whether it's counting the percentage of street light outage requests addressed within ten business days, Boston About Results' is an easy-to-navigate accountability tool that empowers residents to understand how, and how well, city government functions.

Eight Principles of Open Government Data

1. **Data Must Be Complete**
   All public data are made available. Data are electronically stored information or recordings, including but not limited to documents, databases, transcripts, and audio/visual recordings. Public data are data that are not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations, as governed by other statutes.

2. **Data Must Be Primary**
   Data are published as collected at the source, with the finest possible level of granularity, not in aggregate or modified forms.

3. **Data Must Be Timely**
   Data are made available as quickly as necessary to preserve the value of the data.

4. **Data Must Be Accessible**
   Data are available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes.

5. **Data Must Be Machine Processable**
   Data are reasonably structured to allow automated processing of it.

6. **Access Must Be Non-Discriminatory**
   Data are available to anyone, with no requirement of registration.

7. **Data Formats Must Be Non-Proprietary**
   Data are available in a format over which no entity has exclusive control.

8. **Data Must Be License-free**
   Data are not subject to any copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret regulation. Reasonable privacy, security and privilege restrictions may be allowed as governed by other statutes.

SOURCE: www.*opengovdata.org*

When asked what performance measures departments currently track, some answers were both comprehensive and sophisticated. For example, one department included five metrics for departmental performance that ranged from the number of permits issued to the the number of complaints investigated. Other departtments indicated no measurement system, or minimal systems (i.e. "number of emergencies responded to"). When asked about services provided that *could* be measured, departments listed several, including "number of calls received/resolution" and "response times". These responses suggest that a concerted effort to help departments identify and track performance measures could yield powerful results both for internal management and for external communications. Starting with service departmetns like Parks and Public Works and ultimately including all city deparmtnets, **the Commission recommends that Providence develop and disclose key performance indicators, including measurements for real-time performance tracking.**

Private companies with expertise in dashboard development offer their products to governments, some free of charge; NIC USA, the firm that manages RI.gov in addition to the websites of other U. S. cities (San Francisco, New York City, Baltimore) and states (Illinois, Oklahoma, Colorado), makes a

profit solely by charging clients a percentage of fees earned through online transactions. Revenue neutral to the municipality, these firms deliver a high-quality product to residents at no additional cost to government budgets.

A menu of web and mobile applications exist, developed by third party organizations and available as "off-the-shelf products" that could help Providence facilitate greater civic engagement. Code For America, for example, is a residency program that places teams of early and mid-career computer programmers in city governments across the nation with the express purpose of developing new applications to help government function and communicate more efficiently. Code For America's projects include the aforementioned Street Bump mobile app, which collects and remits data on road conditions from smart-phone enabled devices to municipal departments of public works. Other Code For America projects include applications that allow households and small businesses to "adopt" fire hydrants during snow storms and track public school bus locations in real time.

The Office of New Urban Mechanics, an initiative of Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, operates as type of in-house Code For America, developing mobile and web applications for Boston's local context and offering them free of charge to interested cities. **The Commission recommends that Providence partner with these organizations to the greatest extent practical and cost effective**, to borrow those products ready for implementation, to learn from the individuals who created and manage them, and ultimately develop the internal capacity to create and share similar web and mobile applications.

In March of 2011, the City of Providence enacted the first lobbying requirement of any city or town in the State of Rhode Island. This "lobbyist disclosure ordinance" requires lobbyists of city employees, among other things, to register in a public database and to file quarterly reports that identify which city government employees they lobbied, how much they spent on gifts and campaign contributions, and how much they were paid for their work. The Commission found that provisions of the ordinance, including the publicly accessible database, have yet to be implemented and **encourages the timely adoption of this important ordinance**.

Additionally, as noted earlier, the **Commission recommends the dissemination of raw, non-sensitive data from all major service departments**. These data are not only critical in communicating how well the City executes on basic mandates, but also foundational for additional programming and data analysis. Data should be in API and machine-readable format, and should be updated regularly to ensure timeliness and accuracy. Finally, the Commission understands that City departments do not always adhere to common practices related to webpage maintenance. While some department webpages are complete with recent announcements, department mission statements, contact information and the other useful and timely information, other departments maintain minimal or outdated information or are missing entirely. Tellingly, when asked who in each department is responsible for monitoring online communications, responses ranged from "Department Director" to "no one in particular." **The Commission recommends standard procedures and management practices to ensure that department websites remain either timely or, at least, timeless.**

Recommendations:

Accountability data & communications
(Owner: Chief Information Officer, Director of Administration)

- *Make public each department's key performance indicators and make public quarterly performance data that measures progress against clear, measurable goals*
- *In partnership with Code For America, New Urban Mechanics and other civic web and mobile application developers, make full use of "off-the-shelf" and open source products that can be easily adapted to Providence city government.*
- *Enhance the ProvConnex mobile application to allow for uncategorized service requests and a map view of recent requests in similar geographic proximity.*
- *Enhance search functionality by moving PDFs into core HTML format*
- *Establish raw data feeds, in API and machine-ready formats, for non-sensitive data from the City's service departments*

Webpage management
(Owner: Department Directors)

- *Develop online, publicly accessible 'suggestion boxes' on Department websites for public idea submissions.*
- *Establish and implement regular rules regarding webpage management, to ensure that each department's web presence is robust and timely.*
- *Ensure all posts and news items are available via rss with associated widgets*
- *Identify the content owner on each department webpage*

Conclusion

It is no secret that Providence city government has not always been a beacon of accountability and transparency to City residents. And while City Hall has come incredibly far, this Commission understands that sustained leadership from elected and administrative officials is necessary to ensure continued progress in developing and maintaining a city government fully accountable to its residents.

And, just as a challenging past offers Providence a unique opportunity to emerge a national leader in civic transparency, so too does Providence's financial restraints present an opportunity for the City to make progress in the reforms described here. Many of the proposed recommendations require changes in practice but not necessarily new infusions of cash. Indeed, it is the Commission's hope that Providence's resource constraints may encourage innovation and new collaborations, bearing witness to the truism that necessity is often the mother of invention.

It is the sincere hope of this Commission that the recommendations included here serve as a catalyst for change and continued improvement. In support of implementation, **the Commission recommends adopting a progress report**, due on the one year anniversary of the issuance of this report, which details the specific steps taken to implement the recommendations of this Commission.

Recommendations:

Implementation
(Owner: Mayor's office)

- *Issue an annual progress update on the state of municipal transparency, including progress against the reforms described in this report, delivered to the City Council and made available to the public on an open government page of the City's website*
- *Survey users of City data as to the best methods to present data for their needs.*

APPENDIX ONE: Commissioner Biographies

- **John Marion** is the executive director of Common Cause Rhode Island. Common Cause is a nonpartisan advocacy group focusing on open, ethical, accountable and effective government. He was admitted to candidacy at Indiana University Bloomington in Political Science in 2003 and has taught at Indiana University South Bend and the School of Continuing Studies. Along with his wife and two children, he lives in Providence.

- **Nelson Rocha** is lifelong resident of the Providence area, 1st generation American, husband, father of two young twin girls, and citizen advocate for a more open and sustainable government. A worker in Boston's financial services industry as a business systems analyst doing everything from streamlining operations, managing projects and developing internet based systems.

- **John Speck** is Marketing Director at EAW. Speck began his career in 1993 with the Providence, Rhode Island-based advertising firm Mariani, Hurley and Chandler. He joined EAW's marketing department in 1995. In 2000, he left EAW to serve as director of marketing for Mediaspace Solutions, and the following year, he founded Real Advertising, which counted both EAW and Mediaspace Solutions among its clients. Real Advertising merged with the Providence-based New Commons think tank in 2009, and there Speck worked with such organizations as Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, OSHEAN and Providence College.

- **Karina Wood** is a Providence resident of 15 years. She is director of the Rhode Island Tobacco Control Network, and previously served as the founding director of BetterProvidence, a nonprofit promoting civic engagement and open government. An experienced organizer and communications specialist, Karina co-founded and ran the Rhode Island is Ready statewide campaign for an equitable public education funding formula in 2010 and has worked on many civic and statewide public policy issues and campaigns. Karina's two daughters attend Providence public schools.

- **Andrew Law** is an Associate Professor in Industrial Design at the Rhode Island School of Design RISD and the Chair of the Scottish Orkney Island based charity the Erlend Williamson Art Fellowship. He is also the leader of RISD's Cluster for Open Data Research CODR and the Chair of the Calendar Task Force.

- **Jim Lucht** is the Director of The Providence Plan's Information Group. His work at ProvPlan ranges from GIS and data analysis to website development and database design. He has a Bachelor's degree in Urban Studies and a Master's degree in Community Planning.

- **Pamelee M. Murphy** is an attorney who, in addition to private entities, has represented the State of Rhode Island in the Superior and Supreme Courts in various areas including: the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit; the Ethics Commission; the Office of Child Advocate; as well as management rights cases in labor arbitrations and employment matters. She has previously served on the boards of the ACLU, Common Cause, and the RI Arts Advocates.

- **Allan Tear** Allan is a founder and managing partner of Betaspring. Allan has founded three venture-funded startups: Elastic Networks, Incanta, and WhyData. He has raised over $15M from angels, venture capital, and strategic partners, including Slater Fund, Intel Capital and AT&T. He is an expert in new product and service launches. Allan is an active angel investor in early stage technology companies, and advises national, state, and local government on nurturing high-growth startup ecosystems. He helps students and schools with entrepreneurship through the Brown COE program, RISD Mindshare, and the Carnegie Mellon Dean's Leadership Council. He was selected in 2008 for the Providence Business News "40 Under Forty" list and in 2010 as "10 to Watch" by Providence Monthly. Allan is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, with B.S. degrees in Electrical & Computer Engineering, and Public Policy.

- **Elaine Collins**

- **Anna Stetson, City Clerk** has been City Clerk since February 2005. A lifelong resident of the City of Providence she has worked for the City for 25 years. As clerk she is responsible for maintaining and recording all votes, orders, resolutions and ordinances made and passed by the City Council as well as those of its subcommittees, and meetings of the retirement board.

- **Lisa Fries, Assistant City Solicitor (Designee of the City Solicitor)** earned her Juris Doctorate from Roger Williams University School of Law in 2007. Mrs. Fries joined the City Solicitor's office in April of 2012 and concentrates in municipal taxation, serving as counsel to the Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Board of Tax Assessment Review and Recorder of Deeds.

- **James Silveria, Chief Information Officer** is an experienced IT leader in both state and municipal government, with success in providing cost-effective and meaningful solutions to improve communication, productivity, and access to information. When he's not running marathons, you can reach him at JSilveria@providenceri.com.

- **Paul Dicecco, City Webmaster** is an experienced website developer and content management specialist, working with the City of Providence. He has created and maintained successful government and commercial communication and retail websites for organizations throughout Rhode Island, and can be reached at PDiCecco@providenceri.com.

- **Felicia Ingram, Information Technology Specialist for City Council** is a lifelong Providence resident and attended Providence Public Schools. Currently the Information Technology Specialist for the Providence City Council, she has worked in various capacities for the City during her 15-year career in public service. She has been instrumental in a number of Council technology projects, including the redesign of the Council website, the creation of a citizen tracking system, and the development of new IT policies. She lives in the Wanskuck neighborhood with her two daughters.

- **Pamela Cardillo, Director of ProvStat**

APPENDIX TWO: Resolution Creating the Open Providence Commission for Accountability & Transparency

WHEREAS, the Providence City Council and the Mayor of Providence are united in their belief that open and transparent government is essential for citizens to make informed decisions and hold officials accountable for the conduct of the people's business; and

WHEREAS, the policies and practices of the City of Providence should adhere to high standards which instill trust and confidence of local government in its citizens; and

WHEREAS, a public commitment by the Providence City Council and the Mayor of Providence to open government, transparency and establishment of new standards, as well as mechanisms to enact those standards, will facilitate the expansion of the public's access to its government; and

WHEREAS, uncomplicated and timely access to public records, and a means of recourse regarding those records, is the people's ultimate defense from government corruption; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit of the sentiment "Sunshine is the best disinfectant," as stated by United States Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, the City of Providence must make public records and processes transparent and open to public scrutiny in order to expose any government misconduct; and

WHEREAS, the people's right to know the process of governmental decision-making and to review the documents and statistics leading to determinations is basic to our society; and

WHEREAS, advances in communications and information technologies have created more opportunities for the public to access information; and

WHEREAS, fundamental to democracy is the right of the public to know what City government is doing, and how to access the various City departments, staff members, data and official documents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Providence posts public meetings and provides public records by request, in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws, § 42-46-8(a), the Open Meetings Act, and § 38-2-8(b), the Access to Public Records Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability is hereby created.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall be chaired by John Marion, Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island and shall consist of fifteen (15) members: four to be named by the Mayor of the City of Providence, four to be named by the City Council President, and the following members (or their respective designees): the City Clerk, the City Solicitor, the Chief Information Officer, the Webmaster, the Director of ProvStat, and the Information Technology Specialist for the Providence City Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall perform an organizational assessment of the existing Open Government and public information technology, policies, and procedures and establish goals for increasing access to information, government accountability and transparency. To this end the Commission should:

a) Propose a mechanism to make public information, hearings and votes accessible by suggesting changes to the way information is organized and presented on the City's website; and

b) Investigate current technologies and propose the development of a state of the art citizen dashboard and applications to provide new capabilities that government departments can harness to improve services and responsiveness to its constituency at a lower cost; and

c) Develop a feasible plan for implementation with consideration of the challenges inherent in the training and cultural change which is necessary for the adoption of new policies and technologies within city government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall include in its research the best practices regionally and nationally that have achieved quantifiable results.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall work to identify sources of funding to support the changes needed to make the City of Providence more open and accountable to its constituency, as laid out in this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall organize a public hearing, engage relevant community, business and labor stakeholders, and invite appropriate administrative staff to provide important internal and external information.

APPENDIX THREE: Survey Results

1. By what means does your department receive public input? (Indicate all that apply)

PHONE	**91.7%**	**11**
INTERNET	**66.7%**	**8**
THROUGH THE OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES	**66.7%**	**8**
WALK-INS	**66.7%**	**8**
IN THE FIELD	**25.0%**	**3**
OTHER		**5**

- *Filing and defending lawsuits in various courts of law.*
- *Providence Emergency Mangement Advisory Council*
- *E-mail*
- *We receive very little public input.*
- *Mailings*

2. What avenues of communication does your department use to communicate with the public?

PROVIDENCERI.COM WEBPAGE	**91.7%**	**11**
SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, TWITTER, ETC.)	**33.3%**	**4**
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS	**58.3%**	**7**
OTHER	**50.0%**	**6**
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		**7**

- *Filing and defending lawsuits in various courts of law.*
- *Radio-TV*
- *(only the Mayor's facebook page)*
- *phone chain, email*
- *email, phone, public meetings*
- *Radio and other advertising venues*
- *News media TV and Radio*

3. Would your department use a single, centralized social media channel (i.e. a "City Hall" Facebook page and a "City Hall" Twitter account that aggregated input from multiple departments)?

YES	**58.3%**	**7**
NO	**41.7%**	**5**

4. If you answered YES to question #3 above, what types of training, support or guidance would you like to see to use social media most effectively?

- *Just technical details.*
- *Basic training*
- *I would want someone else to be responsible for making sure it was updated frequently and to flag for me when I need to respond to comments.*
- *Guidance on appropriate content.*
- *General guidelines*
- *Not sure we need any*
- *Access and limitations of what can go on it*

5. Who in your department is responsible for updating communications?

- *Matthew Jerzyk, Deputy City Solicitor*
- *Director*
- *The Director and admin staff*
- *Me- Sheila Dormody*
- *Director of Senior Services*
- *Director*
- *Department Head*
- *no one in particular*
- *director*
- *City Collector*
- *Chief Dillon/ Lindsay Lague*

6. What systems, if any, do you use to track direct contacts (i.e. service requests and their outcomes) with the public?

- *Lawsuits and employee performance are tracked internally through a metric-based system.*
- *Q-Alert*
- *IQ department web based system and QALERT*
- *none.*
- *Qalert, service request forms*
- *N/A*
- *We receive very few direct contacts, so they are tracked manually.*
- *QAlert*
- *We don't have service requests.*
- *No system, other than managing inbox requests for information/assistance.*
- *Email*

7. What performance measures does your department quantify and track? (Examples can include anything from tons of snow plowed per winter month to percentage of service requests responded to in 10 days or less.)

- *Attorney hours, Open Government issues reviewed Open Meetings Act Public Records Act Ordinances/Resolutions, Legislation reviewed/drafted, Executive Orders reviewed/drafted, Leases/contracts reviewed/drafted, Memoranda drafted for internal Law Department use, Memoranda drafted for use outside of Law Department, Board/Commission meetings attended, Ethics Tax Issues, Reviewed, Bankruptcy Issues Reviewed, Arbitration hearings , Administrative Hearings , Civil cases filed against the city, Answers Filed, Civil cases filed by the city, Written discovery propounded , Written discovery responded to, Depositions taken, Non-Dispositive Motions Filed, Dispositive Motions Filed, Other Motions Filed, Memoranda Filed with Motions, Non-Dispositive Motions Attended, Dispositive Motions Attended, Objections to Motions Filed, Memoranda Filed with Objections, Other Court, Hearings Attended, Calendar Call, Settlement Conferences/Mediation Attended, Trials resolved by verdict for the City, Trials resolved by verdict against the City, Cases settled, Cases voluntarily dismissed, Subpoenas reviewed, Orders Drafted, Tax Cases filed against City (Assmt Appeals), Tax Cases filed against City (Other), Bankruptcy Pleadings Filed, Criminal Cases Initiated, Motions Filed, Hearings, Plea Bargains, Trials, Defense Verdict, Prosecution Verdict, Juvenile cases reviewed, Juvenile cases filed, Family court hearings, Housing matters heard, Continuances, Bench Warrants, Dismissals, Cases disposed as a result of abatement of violations, Consent Orders, See Annual Budget*

- *# of: Permits, Permit Inspections, Plan reviews, Complaint Inspections, Recalls, working on tracking the response time and resolution time on all the above.*
- *It is something we only indirectly influence so far, but trash volumes and recycling rates of various neighborhoods are tracked on a weekly basis. We also monitor heat and electricity consumption for all city properties to measure effectiveness of energy efficiency initiatives.*
- *None*
- *none*
- *We don't measure and track our responsiveness to public input. We do try to measure and track our public outreach activities through presentations at health fairs and other events (should have probably mentioned that as one source of our interactions with the public)*
- *Tax collected by amount and type of payment, tax sale metrics, interest metrics. These are not really "performance" metrics in terms of personnel performance.*
- *Number of emergencies responded to*

8. How does your department store those measures?

Q-ALERT	**28.6%**	**2**
ACCESS DATABASE	**0.0%**	**0**
GOVERN	**0.0%**	**0**
LAWSON	**0.0%**	**0**
NEW WORLD	**14.3%**	**1**
EXCEL	**57.1%**	**4**
OTHER		**2**

- *Department web based system*
- *Reporting systems used by our grant funders*

9. What activities do you conduct currently that are not quantified and tracked, but could be in the future?

- *Unknown.*
- *Unsure*
- *Response times*
- *Community visits*
- *Number of calls received/resolution.*
- *Public education*

10. How does your department manage public records requests?

- *Via Attorney Amy Crane who has developed APRA procedures.*
- *Via the City Policy*
- *Simple request we just fullfill asap, big request we sent to the Law departmetn for vetting.*
- *I have only had one. I referred it to the law department for approval and then sent the information that was approved.*
- *Forward request to Dir of communications*
- *We receive requests from the Law Department, or direct any other requests to the Law Department.*
- *in cooperation with the Solictor's office*
- *Through the Solicitor's office.*
- *we send them to the law department*
- *Through the law department and with our clerical staff*

APPENDIX FOUR: Hearing Minutes

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

MAY 21, 2012

(DRAFT)

The Open Providence Commission for Transparency & Accountability meets this day at 6:00 o'clock P.M., at the Metcalf Auditorium and Lobby, Chace Center, RISD Museum.

PRESENT: Chairman John Marion; Vice-Chairwoman Karina Wood; Ms. Elaine Collins; Mr. Nelson Rocha; Mr. John F. Speck; Mr. Andrew Law; Mr. Jim Lucht; Ms. Pamelee Murphy; Mr. Allan Tear; Ms. Anna M. Stetson; Mr. James Silveria and Ms. Pamela Cardillo – 12.

ABSENT: Mr. Jeffrey Padwa; Mr. Paul DiCecco and Ms. Felicia Ingram –3.

Also present are Mayor Angel Taveras; Council President Michael A. Solomon; Councilman Seth Yurdin; Councilman Michael Correia; Councilman David Salvatore; William Decatur, Executive Vice-President for Administration and Finance, Rhode Island School of Design; Lisa Fries, Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department; Matthew Jerzyk, Manager of Policy and Municipal Affairs and Senior Counsel to the Mayor; Mayor's Office and Lori L. Hagen, Second Deputy City Clerk.

(Subsequently Ms. Felicia Ingram joins the meeting)

6:00 P.M. – CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN JOHN MARION

6:05 P.M. – WELCOMING REMARKS BY WILLIAM DECATUR, EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN CHAIRMAN MARION: I want to welcome everybody tonight. We're going to try to get underway so that we can take public input here which is the point of what we're doing. And I'm going to start by having William Decatur who's the Executive Vice-President of RISD come and welcome us on behalf of RISD.

6:10 P.M. – WELCOMING REMARKS BY MAYOR TAVERAS,

PRESIDENT SOLOMON AND COUNCILMAN YURDIN

MR. DECATUR: Good Evening. My name is Bill Decatur. As you heard, I'm Executive Vice-President of Finance and Administration here at the Rhode Island School of Design. On behalf of President Maeda, it's my privilege to welcome the Honorable Angel Taveras, Mayor of Providence, members of the Providence City Council, the Open Providence Commission and the Providence Community here to RISD. I hope you enjoy this forum. RISD faculty and students are engaged in numerous activities that link higher education to local government including ways to leverage design and design thinking to improve not just process and systems but also ways in which we access complex information. After the question and answer period, Andy Law, Associate Professor of Industrial Design at RISD and a member of the Open Providence Commission has arranged for a demonstration of some of the tools and processes of art and design that make data more visible and accessible. We are honored to have the Commission here at RISD and support the work that you are doing. The work you're doing represents and is consistent with the core values of higher education and the values

here at RISD. And now, ladies and gentlemen, without further ado please join me in welcoming to the podium Mayor Angel Taveras. Thank you.

MAYOR TAVERAS: Well, first of all I want to thank Bill Decatur and I want to thank RISD for hosting this. This is a phenomenal building, it's a beautiful building and we appreciate your hospitality here. So, thank you. I want to take a moment as well to just recognize our Council President Michael Solomon, he's here and Majority Leader Seth Yurdin, he's here. And they've been very, very involved in this and I appreciate that and I appreciate the work that you've done together over the last sixteen months. I also want to recognize Councilman Michael Correia who is in the back as well, thank you Councilman for being here. I want to take a moment to thank every member of the Commission, we appreciate your help, I know that you're all – people and thank you very, very much for your willingness to help. I recognize that there are some city employees I should've told you this was optional before – but thank you very, very much. And I particularly want to thank John Marion from Common Cause for Chairing and all the work that you do at Common Cause. Thank you, John. And I want to thank Karina, Karina Wood the Vice-Chair as well, thank you very, very much for all the work you've done and in particular – here and I really appreciate that, thank you. Let me just talk very briefly about this, you know, I've been Mayor now for a little bit over a year and it always strikes me that when people walk into the Mayor's Office and they call it my office. I quickly try to say, no, it's the Mayor's Office it's not my office. And that is something I think a mentality that we really need to maintain as Mayor in recognizing that the city belongs to all of you. It does not belong to me. I actually work for you, you gave me a job for four years and we'll see what happens. But, I often tell people that I have a lease in the Mayor's Office for four years, maybe an option to renew, we'll see. But, that's what this Commission is about, it's really about making your government more open to you and making sure that you have information at your fingertips. With the modern technology that we have today, you know, there really is no excuse for making it difficult for people to gather information and especially when it comes to government. So, we want to find out ways that we can kind of address the concerns that people have, make sure that the information is readily available too. We've done some things to help connect residents to the city through Prov Connex and other things that allow you to – with the city. But, this is what this is about it's really how can we help, how can we make information more readily accessible to you, what's the type of information that you'd like and what can we do. But, I want to add one thing now because I've been Mayor for a little bit, now from my perspective there's one issue and I want to explain that to you so that you can think about it as you decide what you think is the – and that is, I guess some people call it an executive privilege or other things, I want to know, I mean, for me it's important that I'm able to get information from people who work for the city without, you know, being worried about it becoming public. Why do I say that? Obviously, you know you have the right to know how we came to a decision but if all my staff – anything that they send over to me, what we talk about, I think what you're going to have is people being a lot more careful about things. And that's not to say that they're hiding anything, it's simply sometimes someone might have a really bad idea, you know, and put it in. Or someone wants to say something, how can we protect the deliberative process? For those of you who are lawyers I guess the best way I can put it is this, as a lawyer there's something called an attorney/client privilege, that's one thing, but there's also a attorney work product which means in discovery when you're in a lawsuit you can get almost a lot of documents, a lot of information from the other side but what you can't get is the attorney work product. How the attorney is thinking and how they use that information. So, I want you to think about that as you talk through this and think about what you can come up with because there is a need sometimes to make sure that you can have frank conversations with your staff and frank exchanges. And so there has to be somehow that you draw a line that I think allows that. Now, obviously I have a different perspective but I've been on the other side as well in entrusting information. You know, we are very careful in terms of what we do –and there are things that I've done as Mayor – I sign a lot of documents as Mayor, there are a lot of different documents, one of the things that we implemented early on is I now require that anyone who sends me a document for my signature has to have a cover memo, that cover memo is put away because one day soon someone's going to ask why did the Mayor sign that document –. And that's why it's there so that you have an idea as to why I made the decision that I made relative to signing documents because it really is a tremendous amount of documents that you have to sign for a broad range of reasons. So, we're trying to make sure that the information is preserved in a

way that the people in the future any historians can look and make a determination but at the same time we're also trying to protect some of the process so that I can – have frank information from our staff. And I hope that as you discuss this you keep that in mind. There's – information from the public that – entitled to, after all it is your government. But there is also something to be said for allowing people to have the process. So, but I do want you to know I believe in this, this is why we're doing it, I'm glad that the Council is here to – and I look forward to seeing how we can make Providence much more open in transparency so all of you who really are the basis of our government. So, thank you for this opportunity to talk with you, I look forward to working with you on this and implementing recommendations in the future. Thank you again to the Commission for your time and for open leadership role in this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you to the Mayor. Next I want to introduce Council President Michael Solomon to give a few remarks.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT SOLOMON: First, I'd like to thank you all for being here tonight. I'm glad to see so many people give their time – in our community. I want to thank the Commission members, John and all of you for giving us your time to the city. And as you know this Commission is to expand the public access to government and it's crucial to the health of our city and our government, that it works as open, efficient and effective as possible. We must utilize new technology to improve the city's performance and to create more dialogue between the public and their government. The Commission's input for the people of Providence, we cannot achieve this mission without the help of everyone here tonight. Again, I look forward to your thoughts, concerns and ideas on how to make the city more accessible and public service more efficient. Your attendance is truly appreciated and we look forward to hearing all your feedback. Again, thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: And last but not least I want to welcome Majority Leader Seth Yurdin whose district, I believe, we are in here at RISD. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN YURDIN: Thanks very much, John. Thanks everybody for being here. This is really a great turnout and a fantastic thing. The administration came forward working with the Council as a partnership on putting this Commission together really with the goal of looking at new technology and how it informs the way that government works. And we put together a number of different Commissioners who, it's really fantastic with the different disciplines; academics, professionals, people who are tasked with delivering city services. And the idea is by them working together getting the input from you, the public, we can really kind of think big because it's a collaboration what each of us have really different experiences about what it's like. You folks, in the audience, understand how frustrating it is to probably reach me or reach a particular department and get something solved. An IT person has a particular view, the City Clerk has a particular task and by putting people in a room and talking this is exactly how we get collaboration, we get a multi-disciplinary approach and a synergy. So, I just urge everybody here to think big, think about how you can try to make things better, not just the small, little things, I mean, this is a really interesting graphic up here which kind of shows the many different thing. I don't think I'd want to click on the arrest on my computer but the point is, is that there's ways of really thinking about doing these things differently. It's a huge opportunity. And thank you all for being here.

6:20 P.M. – EXPLANATION OF THE EVENING'S FORUM BY

CHAIRMAN JOHN MARION

6:30 P.M. – PUBLIC COMMENTS ON TRANSPARENCY IN CITY

GOVERNMENT

CHAIRMAN MARION: So, thank you Councilman Yurdin. I want to start by acknowledging the Commissioners who are here and I think almost everybodywas able to attend. Since, in spirit of the open meetings act we should acknowledge

the members of the Commission. Again, my name is John Marion, Vice-Chairwoman Karina Wood, raise your hand, Elaine Collins, Nelson Rocha, John Speck, Andy Law, Jim Lucht, Pam Murphy, Anna Stetson, Jim Silveria and Pamela Cardillo. Did I miss anyone? I think I got everyone. Okay, thank you very much. Tonight we're here and I should make one more acknowledgment which is to RISD, we want to thank them very much for opening their Chace Center to us and providing refreshments and providing a lot of the logistics that were necessary to pull this off. Last November, the City Council passed a Resolution creating this Commission, this fifteen member Commission for open government. And it's a combination of city employees, as well as, members of the public like myself, some of whom represent organizations, some of whom do not. And we've been meeting for several months now and we were given the charge in the Resolution that created us with proposing a mechanism to make public information, hearing information, that sort of thing, more organized and available on the website of the city. To look at, as several of the speakers already alluded to, how current technology can be used to develop a really a state of the art citizens dashboard they call it, but a way for citizens to find information and data about their government using technology and do it at a lower cost. And then to come up with a plan for implementing this that respects some of the difficulties that are going to come with doing this. So, that Resolution also called for us to have a public meeting where we take the publics input and hopefully we'll have more than one but we're starting with this one and we're going to take that public input in a couple of ways. For about the next hour we're literally going to let you share your thoughts and ideas about what city government can be doing better in terms of providing you with information. And then we're going to transition after that and I'll say a few words about this later, out into the lobby where we're going to have some smaller breakout groups, one particularly centered on the current practices of city government, and Commissioner Rocha has been working on that quite a bit along with several of the other Commissioners and he'll be facilitating that. And then another group that has been looking at some of the best practices in other municipalities are using and Commissioner Speck has been doing a lot of that work on behalf of the Commission. And then also, in addition, as Mr. Decatur said some of Andy's students, Professor Law's students, are going to be giving some demonstrations about ways that data are visualized and I think someone made reference to this and these icons, but there are going to be a number of ways representing how information can be displayed. And we're trying to look at that and see how those technologies might be leveraged by the Commission on behalf of the city government. So, before we get started I just wanted to do a couple more things; one, I wanted to explain the ground rules a little bit for how we're going to take public input. I believe we asked people to sign in as they came in if you wanted to give public input and if you didn't have a chance to sign in you still have Babette in the back from RISD who has the sign in sheets. That's so I can acknowledge you and we can go in some sort of order when we speak. A couple of people are going to be rolling around with microphones and so when I call your name just throw your hand up and we'll get a microphone to you. We're going to ask that you remember that we're taking suggestions here, we probably don't have answers to many of your questions at this point but this is all being recorded by the City Clerk's Office for the Commission. And also, Felipe Sorrento, from RISD is going to be graphically illustrating some of what we're doing here. And this will all be available to the Commission for deliberations as we go on. In addition, we're planning to take the public input and put it in the final report that the Commission will issue at the conclusion of its work. So, we want to make sure you know that even thought you might not walk out tonight with a concrete answer to your problem or your question or your concern that people are listening to those problems and questions and concerns and they're going to take them into account in what we do. Because I know it can be very frustrating to sit there and not feel you're being listened to but there are multiple ways we're listening tonight. And as you give your input we just ask that you take as little time as you can so that the maximum number of people can speak and that if a point's already been made you try not to repeat it. And, with that I'll ask if Babette can bring the list down. And in the meantime I also wanted to acknowledge Councilman Salvatore is here. It's hard to see with the lights. There you go, thank you Councilman for coming. I'll start the list, and again if you want to sign up please go to the back. And then Karina, do you have a microphone?

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: Babette does.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, Babette has the microphone. And, first of all, if I get your name wrong please accept my apologies in advance but we'll start with Lisa Fries

MS. FRIES: Fries.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Fries, I'm sorry.

MS. FRIES: I thought that was just a general sign in.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Oh, okay you thought this was just a sign in.

MS. FRIES: I didn't intend to speak but hello.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yes, if you'd like to speak later please do. Yarrow Thoone, am I saying it right?

MR. THOONE: Yeah, I thought it was a general sign in too.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. I'll just start going down.

MR. THOONE: I'll ask a question though.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, we'll get you a microphone so people can hear you.

MR. THOONE: I can just speak up.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, she's coming.

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: And it will help us to capture in into the notes.

MR. THOONE: I had a question about taxing a property that's being used for community gardens or organic crop growth.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, so again we probably won't be able to answer some of these questions. If a Commissioner wants to pop up and say something you're welcoming to and I'll acknowledge you. And some of the more, sort of, policy questions that are less about the process are going to be more difficult. Because typically the people here are here to look, like, questions I saw, for instances, I should mention this Commission has a website; providenceri.com/opengovernment and people have been putting comments up there. So, somebody had a question up there today about taxes, about how to find tax records on the website for instance. So, that's more of what the thrust we'retrying to get to. But, does the Mayor, do you want to say something?

MAYOR TAVERAS: Well, I'm not certain what your question is regarding. I'm not certain what your question is exactly. What was it? It's about taxing community gardens, is that –

MR. THOONE: We're wondering if there's the ability to not have property taxes being used for organic growth. Because I know there are some concerns in the past with property that was being used for gardens being taxed. And I'm wondering if potential growth or people can get a reduction in the tax or if that's an option for the city, there are other cities in the country that have that option.

MAYOR TAVERAS: Well, given that we're in a tax exempt institution maybe I should be careful what I say. So, I mean, in all honesty if it's held by a tax exempt institution so if it's like Southside Community Land Trust and it's a garden or something else it's not going to be taxed. For us to have an exemption essentially or a reduction for people working there I think it's unlikely that's it's going to happen now. That could be something that we look at in the future when we're a little bit better times. And certainly I would be interested in learning about the other places where it's happened. And

Toby Shepherd and Matt Jerzyk who are both in the policy department we'll have them look at that in terms of other places that it's happened. But, I just want to be honest with you and tell you that I don't think it's likely that that's going to happen right now.

MR. TOGEMANN

CHAIRMAN MARION: Great, thanks. Art Toegemann

MR. TOEGEMANN: Yes. It's been my misfortune to have to take the City of Providence to court. I suffered a traffic accident in Elmwood in 2007 and although Superior Court Judge Manny Vogel sent the case to discovery Judge Patricia Hearst dismissed the case citing the little known public duty doctrine. So, the case was never even heard. And for the purposes of this meeting I'm asking and are complaining that the public duty doctrine subverts due process, transparency and accountability. And I think the city's Law Department should cease employing the public duty doctrine forthwith.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. Thank you for your input. Hillary Davis, do you want to ask a question?

MS. DAVIS: My name is Hillary Davis, I'm the Policy Associate with the Rhode Island ACLU and we do have a couple of concerns. We do share the concerns of a number of other people that I know are in this room at the moment but we have a few that I'd just like to bring to the Commissions attention. First and foremost, I do want to thank you all for holding this meeting, particularly for holding it a time that is convenient with – for the city to really come out and I think that is something that isn't always done. So, we very much thank you for that. In addition, all of these new and innovative ideas that I know that you're going to be coming up with in the near future we do have a couple of concerns and feel that it's important to address some of the real and serious deficiencies which are existing in the ways that policies and practices are currently done in the City of Providence. Particularly, in regard to public records and open meetings. Our concern is that without addressing those issues is really going to seriously undermine whatever it is that you take on here and I really encourage the Commission to take a look at some of these problems. The first and foremost isn't a problem so much of information access as it is for information retention. In the past year alone the ACLU has encountered a number of issues where information just simply doesn't exist. It just manages to somehow disappear. I do understand what the City of Providence deals with a large amount of information but when that information disappears it no longer exists, it is not accessible to the public and it really impacts their ability and our ability to assess government openly and to understand what it is that's going on in City Hall and other rooms around the city. So, for example, earlier this year the ACLU had an inquiry just wondering what categories of information are being filtered on public school computers and wanting to know what websites students can and cannot access. Every other school district in the state got us that information usually in the form of a screen shot that just gives categories so we can take a look. The City of Providence we never received that information because, according to the City of Providence, that information does not exist. Now, of course, we can't combat that information if it doesn't exist, it doesn't exist. But we do have a hard time believing that that is the case. And there are a number of other instances where that has occurred. Before that, we were looking into the city's use of funds – for the past five years and we've received I think six months of checks, the rest have just disappeared. And so these are of concern to us. We do understand, like I say, sometimes information goes missing, there are files, files get lost, you know, offices move, things happen. But when it becomes a systemic issue as it is appearing to be that really does impact open government. And, so we encourage this Commission to take a strong look into some of the information retention policies that are going on in the city and seeing where those can be improved. And additionally just one more brief thing, we do want to mention is that in addition to that there are some circumstances where the City of Providence interprets the state's open records law, access to public records law, much more conservatively than what we believe is intended. In the access to public records act there are exempt issues and everything else is to be released. The City of Providence seems to impose its' own balancing test on top of that and to withhold some documents which ultimately after being challenged on that decision the city – are open records and should be released. We believe that that is an issue of training and understanding and we encourage the Commission to

encourage training and take a look at the training which is going on with the city = and with each individual department and see where all of that can be improved. And with that I look forward to hearing what everybody else has to say and seeing what the Commission can come up with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Great, thank you Hillary. I think the Mayor would like to address a couple of those points.

MAYOR TAVERAS: I want to thank you, Ms. Davis, for your comments. I do want to make it clear and will look into both the school computer issue and the red light camera issue. Because your implication is that we are somehow withholding information or even worse than that getting rid of information and I can tell you that should not be the case and the public has a right to know a lot. And I know the red light cameras I know we – a lot of information to Jim Taracani. And my view is if you're entitled to know it let's go ahead and do it. But, with respect to the access to public records act we may have a different, you know, different opinions on that but we certainly will get you whatever, if we do have one, we'll get you whatever the courts say relative to that. And I think you're saying we have but I just want to make clear that, you know, if you think there are some documents that exist – red lights and the school computer – because we haven't done anything, I know we should not have done anything to – that. So, I just want to be clear on that. I've gotta run but I will be getting feedback. I haveseveral staff members here, I'll also be getting feedback with respect to that and am happy to answer questions in the future as well. Thank you.William Touret

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you, Mayor. Next I have William Touret.

MR. TOURET: I'm probably fortunate that the Mayor has just left – point something to me. First I'd like to thank everybody who's involved in this project, I think it's very commendable and probably overdue. Am I speaking loud enough?

CHAIRMAN MARION: Oh, yeah.

MR. TOURET: The first thing I want to mention is my own experiences already the city has done a tremendous job in making the basic information available either through its' website or whatever. And I think for people who are, have access to computers and are computer literate the city is very far along and doing a very good job. I found, if I can't find something through a city website I can usually call somebody to get that information, everybody's very helpful. But the issue I wanted to address tonight which may be a little off topic and probably relates to what the Mayor mentioned in his introduction along the lines of sort of his executive privilege. There's a problem that I keep running into and get very frustrated by with respect to getting information from the city and that is whenthere are contested matters or matters open to public debate, shall we say, perhaps I'm not using the correct term. As city department one is often left with the impression that the matter has already been decided at a higher level before that hearing really began. And that, you know, much of what goes on at the level, the departmental level is in effect an exercise in futility. And this is obviously a troubled problem because if you walk away from a hearing with that perception it sort of tends to generate apathy or annoyance or whatever, you could waste a lot of resources. If you try to bring those resources to the issue and find that they appear to have been largely ignored. And, you know, what I would like to see and this is going to sound somewhat maybe very idealistic and perhaps to some inappropriate but for example, when there has been a policy decision that is going to affect or determine a matter that is pending in the – or these hearings before a department to which the public is invited to come and participate somehow it would be helpful if we could find a way or think of finding a way to communicate that fact to the public before the hearing begins. And I'm not saying there shouldn't be an executive privilege or there shouldn't be an attorney/client privilege or anything like that. I'll – for several years in the 90's I practiced law in California, in the state court system, and I think some federal courts, they have a practice where tentative decisions are issued a few days before an argument, an argument or motion. Or perhaps on the same day. And so, the judge basically says this is what I'm probably going to do so I want you to come in and not simply argue the whole matter but you tell me where I'm wrong. And it's probably a – what I'm thinking of but here if, for example, the Mayor's Office

or some other – or somebody within the Mayor's Office has made a policy decision that something absolutely must go in a certain way then if that were somehow communicated. For example, there could simply be a statement – there's a city or the Mayor or whomever has decided that this should go a certain way or there are very strong considerations in this direction, in this – direction on the issue. I think two things would happen; one, people might not agree with that but at least they would have an understanding of what really happened. Because of the absence of that information the notion of the hearing really isn't very truthful –. Now, you could almost debate in it's context the hearing method of the hearing – talking about well perhaps the observer's incorrect, maybe they – policy. But it's that vacuum that is such a problem. Am I making myself clear?

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, I mean –

MR. TOURET: I'm sort of getting the sense I'm not.

CHAIRMAN MARION: No, no, it's hard, I know, because we're not going to be able to provide you with answers necessarily. But, you know, I think people understand. We've heard, I've heard complaints before about these sorts of things.

MR. TOURET: And to take this just one step further if I may, I don't want to hear it.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Sure.

MR. TOURET: But, this would also apply to such areas as regulation writing by departments because oftentimes the writing of regulations is done after some kind of public participation. And if you're a member of the public that participates the regulations that come out seem to come from somewhere other than what you participated in. And what I'd like to do, my position is, for example, find out who is the individual who wrote the regulations and I'd like an opportunity to discuss with that person what they were thinking or how they came to that conclusion that caused them to draft the regulations in the form in which they appeared. So, both of these concepts I'm talking about it seems to me there are steps missing in some of the public processes. And, it would be helpful if the Commission could consider a way that perhaps, and it's very – make this ad-hoc in a situation, but – a general rule, but that the so called executive privilege could be pared back in some way slightly to inform the public a little better about how or why certain actions are taken whether they be individual decisions or the regular issues.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. Thank you. And I'll say when we do the breakout sessions if you're able to stay I know several of us went up to Boston and examined some of the ways they're using technology to overcome some of these problems. And they demonstrated for us one way where prior to a public meeting they take public input prior to the meeting so that everybody starts at a level of understanding prior to the meeting or are at least informed to a certain degree that makes the meetings a more productive thing. And I'm sure John Speck will talk a little bit about that and answer your questions about what we saw there. Next I have Yunnus Quddus.

MR. QUDDUS: Quddus.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Sorry.

MR. QUDDUS: Okay. I'm looking at this thing and I'm trying to keep this as short as possible. First thing, I want to thank Karina for inviting me to this event. First of all, I came to listen and see what the concerns were and then some things started to arise. So, -- I was looking at, I teach poetry and acting and performance and story telling in a lot of the schools private and public schools in the area. And I get a chance to go into classrooms and see and schools and see what kids have available. And I look at what the kids have in the private school versus public school, it's like, these guys are like so far behind. And it's not – I don't think it's giving them all computers it goes far deeper than that. So, I want to know what you guys are planning to do to continue to help get the kids caught up in the public school, get them caught up

to where they compete with kids in private school. That was my first question. Okay, I'll give you a second to digest that. And the second question, I also teach in the Providence Community Library and what I'm trying to do is, we do, they have funding set up so when the kids come in from eight all the way up to eighteen and they can come in and learn how to write and learn how to perform and I provide those programs for kids in urban communities who don't have the opportunities in those schools. So, I'm here to ask about the funding, we're always struggling for funding to keep the program going every one of my bosses is like I don't know if we're going to have it next time and I have to try to get this grant and we gotta, you know, it's always a struggle. And I know the libraries almost closed recently so if those libraries close where do you think those kids are going to go. That's one part of my question. The other part is the funding for the Providence Community Libraries and in general. Those are the two questions I had and wanted to know about or start a conversation towards.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. Thank you. I'm not sure anybody wants to take those. I'll just say briefly the scope sort of what we're charged with doesn't really fall into to –

MR. QUDDUS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN MARION: -- you know, the funding issue. But, I think a lot of people, you know, like the Mayor said there are a number of members of his staff here who are listening and I think there's members of the Council staff here too. So, you're being listened to, if not being given an answer.

MR. QUDDUS: I'll be here for awhile if you want to talk to me after.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. Thank you.

MR. QUDDUS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Next I have, Katiuska Perez.

MS. PEREZ: Yeah, I thought it was a general sign in

CHAIRMAN MARION: Oh, you thought it was a general sign in, okay, thank you. Liz Palter.

MS. PALTER: Good Afternoon. I kind of – but I do have a concern that I –

CHAIRMAN MARION: She'll hand you a microphone.

MS. PALTER: Okay.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thanks.

MS. PALTER: I do have a concern and that is in reading the Providence Journal I seem to get quite a bit of information. But, one of the things that I'm concerned about is the sale of the open parcels thatwe have. How transparent is that going to be? And the transparency around the city negotiating one of its' distinguished private institutions and the negotiation about the streets. I mean, I didn't see that coming and I'm curious about that, how does that play out finally or eventually? Will there be transparency about how those negotiations occur?

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, I think Matt Jerzyk who's the Mayor's, the head of his policy office would like to address this.

MR. JERZYK: Hi, how are you doing? The agreement with Brown University will be submitted to the City Council for their consideration and that process should happen within the next week or two. And then they're going to hold a whole series of meetings and public hearings so the public has a chance to review the documents as well.

MS. PALTER: Okay. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: That's very good. And I just wanted to add also that the I-195 Commission is a state run Commission that might be looking at parcels or will be looking at parcels. So, that's a public Commission, all their records and meetings have to be done in public and you can attend as a member of the public and all the minutes will be posted on the Secretary of State's website.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, and I'll add to that. For people who aren't familiar, any public body including this group their agenda has to be posted forty eight hours in advance on the Secretary of State's website. So, if you go on line and go to the Secretary of State's website and then there'll be a link to open meetings and then it will allow you to search by the name of the body. So, if you search by I-195 or you search by Open Providence you'll come up with the body. And you can actually set alerts and they will email you when a new agenda has been posted which is a handy feature that I take advantage of. So, that's one way to keep track of these. Is it Deborah Zaki?

MS. ZAKI: Yes. Right here.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay. She's going to get you a microphone, hang on.

MS. ZAKI: Okay. I do have just a couple of things that I'd like to say one thing and then ask a question. First of all, I did go on your site today and I did try to look up who is on your Commission and how they were selected. Perhaps there's a reason why each individual is here and the benefits that they bring to the Commission. I did notice that it's a non diversified group for the most part. I kind of feel like I'm at a College Hill Neighborhood Association meeting. I didn't know if there's going to be a posting on the site on who's on the Commission,what background they're bringing in and who they represent because it really doesn't seem to look like it's a representation of the city as a whole.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you. And I'll take fault for that, I was –there's a dead link there and we have the information about the Commission and who appointed them and we can get that out there.

MS. ZAKI: Is it going to become more diversified as the time goes on?

CHAIRMAN MARION: This Commission has a window and it will disappear in about a month.

MS. ZAKI: Okay. And also I'd like to state and I did put it on your site that I really think that Housing and Probate Court need to be accountable within the city and should have a site also within the site for the laws and rules of both Housing and Probate Court. This is a very anti-friendly, sorry I have a neurological disorder, so if my neck's wobbling that has nothing to do with anything I can control.

CHAIRMAN MARION: No, thank you.

MS. ZAKI: However, I do want to bring up that the city is extremely anti small business. I was brought to Housing Court that cost me many, many thousands of dollars because of the fact that they believed gossip about my mixed use business within my location at 150 Lloyd Avenue. And, it was zoned mixed use since 1955 but yet I was hauled into Housing Court for multiple reasons which cost me a lot of money in attorney fees and the zoning and inspections department did not even do their own research but yet there's no recourse in the city to go either recoup financial costs involved with a very small business for things that they're brining you to court and they didn't even do research on. And also, as a small business owner it's shocking to see the way that they can just come into a business like they're conducting a drug bust

with nothing substantiating theirreason for being there. I'm operating a medical spa with a physician and I have full zoning and full permit. But, be it Housing Court or be it also Probate Court which also operates without any cap on estate fees in the state and I know multiple people where I'm in Probate Court now for over ten years at a cost of attorney fees up over a million dollars for a non contested, non fortune 500 estate in this city which I would tell anybody that lives here do not get involved whatsoever in putting your trust in estate in the Providence Housing Courts, I mean, Probate Court. And I really, really think this needs to go because it affects every family in the city if they own property and end up within the probate system, they can lose every single thing that they've worked as a family to have for years and lose all monies for their children as well. I think that this has not been addressed on your site as of yet and we need to know the rules and regulations of both Housing and Probate Court within the city and within the state.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you. And one thing she brought up that's a good point, the website allows you to put comment on there and then it actually allows you to rank. So, if a lot of people put comments on there and you think that they are particularly good comments you can vote for them and that can give us some idea of what the emphasis of your needs and wants are based on the comments. So, I'd encourage you to go to openprovidenceri, excuse me, providenceri.com/open-government and it's on – it's printed at the bottom of the backside of all your agendas. Bob Lowder.

MR. LOWDER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN MARION: She'll bring you a microphone.

MR. LOWDER: Well, this is almost where do you start right. The – listed three things; transparency, collaboration and partnership. If you're going to have meetings within the city and the city wants to become transparent then every meeting should have – be open to the public, they should have that posted in which case you can attend the meeting, if you have something you want to say you should one, send a memo in which indicates what it is the subject matter you want to talk about so you can express that opinion. And in the collaboration, the biggest problem the city has is tax on property to create a revenue flow so we're not bankrupt. And the collaboration between the state and the city would be real simple if they would merely tax educational facilities on their income producing property. Like Brown has houses across the street from ours that they get $1,200.00 a month for a room and there's 40 rooms in the place up there, that property is income producing and should be taxable. The Book Store, income producing should be taxable. Football stadium, income producing and taxable. The classroom, different story. It should not be taxed. And so if you're looking for a partnership, the partnership's gotta start with the state coming back to the city and then from the city to the people and the organizations within it. Until you can hear that I don't see – and you've got a problem except declare bankruptcy with the city.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you very much. I know that the very first part about making sure the meetings and all the and all of that is more accessible is a big part of our mandate in trying to make sure that when you know there's a meeting or you want to see if there's a meeting you only have to go to the one place to find that out so.

MR. GERRITT: Is this on? I have kind of two separate points. One is, there's certain kinds of data that it would be great if you all would collect because then it would be very useful for the city. And one is our ecological footprint, you know, and start to think about full cost accounting when the city is really do its' accounts. Another type might be some better data on trash and how we can stop putting things that we can reuse in the trash. And good data would probably help that argument more, I mean, there's some estimates but real data would be great. Another place for transparency is in the philosophy of government, I'm not sure how you get at that. But, we're stuck with that, with 38 Studios and the city does the same kind of thing, it has an approach to economic development with all the tax breaks and other kinds of inducements to business. And that's based on an assumption about how the world works that may not be real good based on – how you get the city to actually discuss what is – and what the strategies are. So that you can say, you know, 38

Studios isn't going to meet the criteria of a good community development. And so how do we get the discussion out of the hands of the 1% and into the hands of all of us and transparency is probably going to be one of the tools. So, I'd like you all to think very hard about how we get transparency in the discussion of what's economic development.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you, Greg. Peter McCLure.

MR. MCCLURE: Two, actually, I would – technology – and one that goes over more in the technology policy. Bus rides, my guess is that few of us here are riders of busses, the greatest thing that I have heard of and seen are that most people since almost every person regardless of their income appears to have, I don't have one, but appears to have a cell phone or something like a smart phone that they can have a zillion different apps on. And the app that I've heard is available in other cities and it's particularly important for people of lower income that have a difficult time meeting transfer points and what have you or stand out in the rain like we had this afternoon waiting for the bus that the GPS contraptions which is a wonderful, technological fun to get into that comes down and the app that lets the person know exactly where the bus is along the street and they can stay in, out of the weather or what have you until that time. So, that's a technological boost, I would think, for the city. And I know the bus system goes beyond the city limits itself but that's it. The other thing is another nuisance point is that I find that it's a real pain the neck to try to contact the Mayor or the City Councilors or people in the city, my darn emails bounce back, okay. And you have to go through a ritual, you have to go through a ritual that is really a nuisance that is not too clear. And so when I do go through that ritual it's not clear whether I have gone through that ritual so I end up calling the office and asking them whether they – and my email has come in. So, that is a nuisance item that I would hope can be reduced or mitigated very much. – the policy side but it's still transparency since I feel like I spent half my life sitting up in Annaldo's Board of Licenses on hearings and where it comes from, where the rules comes from is just amazing because there are no rules and there are no procedures, public procedures. That Board has been asked for the last, not only this our current year, but even David Cicilline had asked that Board to come up with rules, not rules, but policies, how do they make their decisions, in other words. What are the criteria for making their decisions? Which affects both the club owners and the public, neither know what is going on. Now, it's – they get off the hook by saying it's an administrative hearing and not a legal court hearing. What is an administrative hearing? That just seems to be whatever the feeling is of that group that day that is hearing a particular argument and neither side, the public nor the maybe the person the group that's been called up before the board, has an idea of what is going on. To me, and this has been said before by some of the others, having general rules, there's always exceptions, but having your rules written down in a way that parties can understand them seems tome to be at least a minimal point and then having – you're looking into to make those rules and/or procedures more understandable to the public online and to the people that are maybe being brought up before the board, both sides. The last thing, is the term negotiation and this where Will Touret's – found quite interesting, there are a lot of things that both political people and like the Mayor has to do that cannot always be up to me, cannot always be in full public view. Now, that sounds sort of scary once you say that but negotiating for salaries, negotiations even for – on salaries and negotiating say even with Brown, Ruth Simmons and the Mayor have not been able to stand out in a public forum or an auditorium and negotiate what they're – both sides are doing. It's taken them several years apparently to get this far. So, I don't know what to say on negotiation other than I think Will Touret's recommendation of once it starts to form to have perhaps that made public, if this is the direction you're heading and entertain ideas to the contrary maybe we've overlooked something. I think that's a very good idea. But, I know that negotiation can – is to be an executive privilege some things have to be, as I've been in those situations, perhaps much less than we have now because it's very easy for a Commission or a political leader to say oh, we have to go into executive session, we can talk about this in public. Sometimes that's true but I don't know where they – are. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you. I think you're going to get answer on the point, maybe about the email from Jim Silveria who's the CIO, Chief Information Officer, for the City of Providence.

MR. SILVERIA: Regarding the email issue, I've been with the city for a little bit less than a year and one of the first projects that, you know, we undertook last year was to replace our email and spam filter processes. So, around the turn of the year toward the end of 2011 we put a new system in place to filter messages coming into the city accounts, it no longer challenges you to reply and resend a message. So, I think we've addressed that issue, you might still find occasionally that a message gets rejected like a spam – but that should be greatly reduced.

MR. MCCLURE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you, Jim. Next I have Jessan Dunn Otis.

MR. OTIS: My concern has to do with all the meetings, all the issues, all the ways of communicating that for those who are plugged in is great but for those who aren't what about them. I mean, this is not representative of the City of Providence and there are a lot of folks who don't have –

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, if you could speak louder. A little louder.

MR. OTIS: A little louder.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yes, please.

MR. OTIS: So, my concern is with all the folks who are not plugged in. There are extraordinary issues and opportunity to communicate and collaborate but if it's not shared to the greater number I think the effort is not wasted but it's not appropriate. Because the folks that are not plugged in might be the folks that you really need and want to communicate with who affect change, who work from the ground up rather than from the top down.

MR. SPECK: Can I ask you –

MR. OTIS: Sure.

MR. SPECK: -- when you use that term plugged in are you – you're referring to connected in network like – or socially –

MR. OTIS: No, electronically.

MR. SPECK: You mean in terms of having access to computers.

MR. OTIS: Yes.

MR. SPECK: To information.

MR. OTIS: Yeah, to information. I know that they're in libraries and I know that they're used a lot.

MR. SPECK: What we call the digital divide. I just want to make sure you're talking about that –

MR. OTIS: That –

MR. SPECK: -- connected.

MR. OTIS: Yeah, yeah, yes.

MR. SPECK: Okay.

MR. OTIS: I mean, I will never have a smart phone, I have a very dumb phone, it doesn't even take pictures. But that's not my point. All my work is online so I have to be plugged in that way but for those folks who don't have that, who

don't want that, some people choose not to do it and that's fine, but they still need the information, they still need to be communicated with, they still need to be listened to. Whether or not – I suggest there might be more that aren't connected in the digital way, in the information highway way, then there are connected. I'm suggesting that that's true, I don't know, but, that's my concern. Because if it's in inclusive then to a certain degree, a greater degree, it's exclusive and I suggest that that's not what this about.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, I can say as a Commission we, right at the beginning, we talked about this issue and some of what we found, at least the some of us who were able to engage with Boston, was that there's a little bit of a generational thing that the younger generations might not necessarily have a computer access but they have cell phones and so that when we think about things we have to think about them across, sort of, platforms. So, yes it's nice to have a shiny app for your smart phone but a text message to a regular cell phone might do the trick. And a website might be for someone who does not use a computer and all the above might not apply to a significant part of the population. And so that's – we're very cognizant of that.

MR. OTIS: Can I – more into a follow up?

CHAIRMAN MARION: Mmm hmm.

MR. OTIS: Okay. So, this Commission is going to disappear – you said. How is what's being communicated, what's being created, what's being established, what's being learned and understood, how is that going to them be sent out into the community? I mean, the Commissioners, I suppose have a certain charge to be there as Commissioners or as individuals and the organizations and departments have charges. But, how do you bring it down to a neighborhood like Smith Hill? How do you bring it down to that level and then have meetings within those communities that filter everything down to, my next point, who doesn't have a computer, who doesn't want a computer, who doesn't have a smart phone? How do you do that? It needs to get to that, I believe, it needs to get to that –.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, thank you. I appreciate that.

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: Can I ask you just as a Commissioner, I mean, we grappled with this, I grapple with this issue all the time, is how, when you don't have a budget, which, we don't, how do you then reach regular citizens all over Providence without using the internet or email which, of course, is free? We've got printed posters that we try and put up in library branches, a notice that goes in the newspaper. But, if any of you, and I'm being totally sincere here, can give us more examples of how do you reach more citizens, how do you do it without a budget and non electronically?

MR. OTIS: Yeah, I see the number of people that are here and how I learned about this is Facebook.

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: But how would you do it otherwise?

MR. OTIS: Do you mean how would I do it?

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: Like, how shall we reach people non electronically without money? I'd love ideas.

MR. OTIS: Bulletin boards, community boards and libraries and shopping markets. I mean, really grasp the basic stuff.

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: So, just more posters as many places as we can put them. Sure.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, we –

VICE-CHAIRWOMAN WOOD: Maybe in the comments, if anyone else has them, can talk to us afterwards.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, especially Karina and I and Elaine worked on outreach for this and if we're doing this again we'll try to perfect it for next time. So, please come talk to us. I want to make sure we get through the complete list before – we might have enough time to take some more questions. Tara Pinsky.

MS. PINSKY: Hi. I want to thank you for doing this. I'm also the Chair of the Providence Republicans which, in Providence is like being a captain of a canoe. There aren't that many registered Republicans. I have a series of questions for the Commission, if you don't mind and then I have some suggestions. First, I'd just like to know how many of you reside in Providence? All. Okay, great. How many of you are registered Democrats? You don't have to answer.

CHAIRMAN MARION: I mean, I'll say that

MS. PINSKY: I'm just curious just what your diversity on the political side as well.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Yeah, I – can I – I'll take a time and just say about half the Commission was appointed as members of the public and about half are here by virtue of their jobs with the city. So, we have the CIO and actually Felicia is here, I should acknowledge, who is the technology person for the City Council, Pamela runs ProvStat, so we have a number of people who are here because of their positions. Anna is the City Clerk. So, there – just because we had some questions and it wasn't up on the website. And then the other half, roughly, are people who are – half are the public members, sorry, half of the public members are appointed by the Mayor and half were appointed by the City Council. That was determined by a Resolution that the City Council passed in November laying out exactly who would be on the Commission. So, I just wanted to clear that up.

MS. PINSKY: Well, I, you know, being a Republican in Providence am very skeptical since there's not one elected Republican in the city or senate or rep. So, I'm just trying to point out that this is slanted. And, I just want to point it out.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, yeah.

MS. PINSKY: And, I just want to know is anyone receiving compensation?

CHAIRMAN MARION: No, no, no one is receiving compensation.

MS. PINSKY: Okay, great. So, I have some suggestions. I have been – the Freedom of Information Act for the city, for City Council I would love to know on the website attendance records for Committee meetings and City Council,when they have their meetings twice a month, I would like to know their voting records. I would like to know minutes, I would like to have audio of the Committee meetings, access via the internet or –. Iwould also like to have capability to Skype in if I can't make it downtown because the parking is tremendously difficult downtown at night and I should like more access. I would also like to know that Committee meeting hearings are not held simultaneously, there' s no way you can attend two; Finance has one the same time as Ordinances, etc. And I think there should be one night, open mike night, on a Thursday that the public can speak.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, thank you. I can say as to the live streaming and that the votes, that was like right in the mandate for the Commission that the Council passed, that is one of the things that they want to get out of this. And I know that Paul DiCecco, who is not here but is on the Commission, and is the Web Master for the city, has been exploring those options quite a bit to try to make that happen. And the vote part also. So, those are two things, I can't speak for the whole Commission, but those are two things that I'm sure are going to come out of this process. They're trying to make that happen. Of course, resources being difficult but we're even, I know they've explored, there are sites with advertising which, might be the price that has to be paid in order to get that live streaming. So, thank you.

MS. PINSKY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Anthony Gemma.

MR. GEMMA: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time. I know this is – time is valuable, so I have a couple comments. One, I'll answer your questionon live streaming, you can easily do it with UStream, it's $100.00 dollars a month, so it's pretty readily available for you and you can have it up and running next meeting. I did, I want to offer something, I did try to meet with the Mayor's Office going back a year and a half ago, I did have a meeting with the Mayor but it ended up being with just his Chief of Staff, I am making a dashboard that I created available for free to the City of Providence. The dashboard is, I invested over a hundred thousand dollars into it and it is, it does take into account best practices around the country, I've done a tremendous amount of research. So, to answer the prior question about how to get information to people there are municipalities that get it and frankly, Boston is one of them but not nearly as progressive as some of the other municipalities in the country. There's a gold standard in Florida, there are twenty-eight different information points that are free and available to get to, you know, to get to the constituents. So, this information is available, best practices is available. I would offer the dashboard that I've already created as a starting point for you and it would actually probably save you a lot of time. I mean, if you want to be successful you mirror match someone that's already successful. There are municipalities that already have done this. I would recommend highly putting in measurements into your dashboard that allow for constituent satisfaction measurements and they could be done in real time so you know how your constituents are feeling, as well as, the municipal government employees how they feel. You can do that and that's being done. And, this other municipality that I'm referring to is measuring eighty other – is measuring themselves against eighty other municipalities in the country. So, you know how you stand against how we stand against any other – the best performing governments and municipal governments specifically in the country. So, I would recommend that. This is already created so rather than reinventing the wheel youmay want to start with stuff that's already been created. I did have a question on email since the Mayor brought it up in his opening address, although the Mayor will not make email available in the current administration, which, I don't understand to some level, there were Freedom of Information requests made of the prior administration and that was made through Tim White of Channel 12, and I'm wondering what, maybe Matt Jerzyk can answer that question as to whether those emails from the prior administration were made available to the public. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Not to, I can speak actually of the law, which is, that the Access to Public Records Act has a section that specifically exempts, and this is a state law just so you're – everybody's clear, it's not a policy set by the city and that's not to defend the city that's just to clarify, and that has a specific exemption for the correspondence of elected officials. So, in theory the correspondence of other public officials, non elected officials, if they don't fall under the other exemptions and there are many in the Access to Public Records Act, would be public. But, correspondence specifically of elected officials are not in state law. I will take off my Commission hat and put on my, I run an organization called Common Cause, we are advocating along with Hilary Davis for the ACLU and other groups up at the State House to change that exemption. So, just to give you the status of that, to – we have – there's a bill 87555 that would exempt correspondence with constituents but other official correspondence of an elected official would be subject to the Access to Public Records Act. So, that's my Common Cause hat, I'll take that one off and put back on my Commissioner hat. And, the last person I have signed up and the we might have just a minute or two more if anybody else wants to speak, Margherita Pryor.

MS. PRYOR: Hi. I guess –

CHAIRMAN MARION: Margherita, she's going to hand you a microphone so we can record it better.

MS. PRYOR: Thank you. I just want to amplify on what many other speakers have already said and maybe add a couple of details. I think the best thing that you all can do would be to print, put out timely, comprehensive meeting minutes. It's embarrassing to not be able to see what the City Council deliberations have been and the Committee meetings. So, and in addition to meeting minutes we ought to be able to have access to the reports and the studies that the Council

members rely on when they make their decisions. This sort of goes into, I've been in a number of meetings as part of my job in other cities just in Rhode Island at least, and they'd go out of their way to at least make materials available to people who bother to come and participate as we should. We go to meetings, we have no idea what is being discussed, there are papers that the members are looking at that we don't know what they're looking at, those materials should be made available in advance, if there is not at least at the – of the meeting. I also wanted to just comment on the appointment of various bodies within the city, I don't know how these appointments are made, I think it would be very well for the city to adopt at least the alleged openness that the state has where even somebody who's going to try to be a judge can apply through a coupon in the Providence Journal. I think there's a lot of people out there, you don't have enough engaged people that you can waste that talent and just keep going back to the same wells. So, I'd like to see more openness in your appointments. I think, again, just reasonable accommodation for people who come to your meetings, the City Hall is beautiful but you cannot hear what is going on, it's horrible, the acoustics are terrible, it seems like we ought to have meetings, some place like this would be wonderful for where you expect to have large groups. And, just to follow up on Peter's comment about email, the black hole of commenting online is hideous, you don't have any idea what has happened to your comment. You never get an acknowledgement, never – it doesn't give you a sign that it has accepted your comment, that should be fixed. And finally, just to follow up on the previous comment about a dashboard, I would also urge and have urged that the city adopt a comprehensive plan with metrics about what's it's going to be evaluated against. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you very much. There's a second part of tonight and I want to get to that because I think that's going to be valuable too. I see a couple of people poised to raise their hands and if you could be really brief and then we'll move on to that. Because they have to close the doors here at 8:00 P.M., the museum is actually closed on Monday's so they opened this up just for us. So, David Kolsky

MR. KOLSKY: My name is David Kolsky, I run the neighborhood discussion group for Wayland Square. A couple of points; one is that I'd like to just give you a general idea of what – how it looks from our point of view in neighborhood groups. There's basically three ways, I think, that the city communicates other than direct mail; one is through the news media, you know, both professional and, you know, informal news media. The other is through, the second is through the website and emails and the Mayor's weekly newsletter and various – through that. And third is through various, what Communists call transmission belts but I mean, you know, in other words it goes through political parties, it goes through community groups and it goes through neighborhood associations. From neighborhood associations, we have to think oddly enough in terms of like, because of the deadline, at least on the East Side, the deadlines of the East Side – we have to think about things six to ten weeks in advance being because now I – get into my column, next week I'll have to write in my column the July issue of East Side Monthly. So, you know, you tell me about a meeting next week or like this meeting I could put it out to my Yahoo groups and I could pass it on to other neighborhood groups. But, there, you know, my own neighborhood, you know, I faithfully have a meeting that nobody comes to every month and my next one is next Wednesday and then I'll have another one a month from that. But, you know, we have a very – process so it's sometimes hard to coordinate that with, you know, Commissions that sprout up and are gone in two or three months. And I'm not saying that I have a magic solution but it's something you should consider when you're considering all different technical aspects. We've now had three Commissions; the Redistricting Commission, the Charter Review Commission and this Commission that have sort of been set up and then maybe a month before they vanish they have a public hearing and either nobody shows up, this is a huge exception, but either nobody shows up or the only people who show up are a huge, you know, special interest group that maybe represent, certainly represent themselves, but may not represent other people in the city. And as people have stated this is not representative of people on the outside of the problems. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you. Sir, if you can keep it really brief.

?: One minute, I got a timer.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Okay, he's got a timer.

?: First thing, to answer the question you were asking, how to reach people with very little or no money, the first thing just an idea is I host a lot of events in the city you can go to some of these events, some of them are like $5.00 dollars to get in, some of them are free to go in. And hey I want to tell you about this thing – I have some flyers, easy to do. The second thing you can do I thought a call in line for people who don't use a computer, a line you can call in and say hey, and a computer system that tells you what are the events for the day, two or three events that are going on. And the third thing, public access TV is usually free, just smile and be nice to them and they'll let you put up events of what's going on within your community or your organization. That's it.

7:30 P.M. – BREAK OUT SESSIONS ON CURRENT PRACTICES

(LED BY COMMISSIONER NELSON ROCHA) AND BEST

PRACTICES (LED BY COMMISSIONER JOHN SPECK) AND RISD

PROJECT DEMONSTRATIONS (INTRODUCED BY

COMMISSIONER ANDY LAW)

CHAIRMAN MARION: Great, thank you. And I know the City Council meetings I believe are taped and put up on public access TV now so that's one way they're doing it. And then they're going to try to live stream too. So, at this point because we don't have a ton of time we're going to call Andy Law up and Olivia Voss, his student up here, and they're going to explain a little bit about the projects that we wanted you to see out in the lobby. And I'm also going to implore you to go to the tables, Nelson's going to be at one and John's going to be at the other talking about current practice and best practices and what they've seen so far. And then there's a wall with some of these giant post it notes where I've posed some questions and some very somewhat specific questions and some more austere questions and I would encourage you if you have ideas just put them down there, we're gathering at this point and we want as many ideas as we can get. So, please hang around and participate in those things if you could. And thank you very much for coming. Several people have acknowledged that we've had a good turnout and we're very grateful you spent this Monday night with us.

MR. LAW: So, Hi. I'm Andy, this is Olivia who's a grad student. So, just to thank all the grad students because it is exam week so they've turned up to show you their work, a very busy time for them. We've got a lot of tables outside, each table's got a different look at what's possible with open data, most of the projects are open tools and these are to allow people to create useful services on devices. Did you want to say something very quickly?

MS. VOSS: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So, Andrew and Adam if anybody's in the room if you could just raise your hand I don't know if you are here, they're definitely out there in the lobby. So, Andrew and Adam they'll be showing their open tools for book sharing and creation. Collin, who is an adjunct member of RISD faculty and Sophia will be showing some examples of the power and beauty of data visualization. – and Justin, they'll be showing their playful, responsible tools for creating and commissioning objects. Patrick and Kell and – are going to show some network electronic devices developed using open kit systems. And finally the David's, we've got one over here and one back there, are going to ask you to play a game that helps you to develop your own ideas for Open Providence tools and visualizations.

MR. LAW: So, hopefully you'll see that RISD students are really interested in open systems and what's possible with them and what we really have to, well, what was said before, is – after your ideas. So, if you see these projects and maybe you can think about how the city might use those. David's got a table where he's using these icons that represent, this is what data the city's actually has got that you can release. So, if people can generate ideas about what we can do with that, that would be great. So, that's about it.

CHAIRMAN MARION: Thank you. So, yeah, so please, we have a half an hour, if you can join us out in the lobby and share some more of your ideas we'd be very grateful. And all the – thank you very much.

City Clerk

Second Deputy City Clerk