

ARLINGTON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMISSION

6:00 PM, Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

MEETING MINUTES

In attendance:

Chair: Mary Crannell

Vice Chair: Frank Jazzo

Members Present: Jonathan Adelstein, John Burke, Mike Carleton, Phil Caughran, Martha Moore, Kevin Robins, Jackie Snelling

County Staff: David Herlihy, County Staff liaison
Holly Hartell, County Staff liaison
Jack Belcher, CIO

Members of the Public: Kevin Broadhurst, Comcast and Louise Anderson, Verizon

Visitors: Nina Janopaul, President and CEO of Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) and Nathaniel Root, APAH's Data Analyst

Meeting called to order by Chairman, Mary Crannell

6:00 PM

Public Comment

None

Chairman's Comments

Introduction and welcoming of **Nina Janopaul, President and CEO of Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) and Nathaniel Root, APAH's Data Analyst**

Nina Janopaul

- High cost of Wi-Fi and cellular services
- Families have no service or limited services
- Most families depend on their cellphone for all of their internet access
- Some barriers include:
 - Cost
 - Language
 - Technology Dexterity
- COVID has hi-lighted the importance for digital access and some challenges
 - As a landlord, cannot send notices to all residences instantaneously.
 - Producing Flyers because so many residencies do not have email.

- Challenge for residents to participate in Telehealth
- School from home. 900 residents that are under the age of 18. Not being able to access and participate in classes has been a real hardship, that has been changing with the work of APS and Arlington County.
- Devices schools have provided with County funding has been meaningful.
- With COVID the digital divide has exacerbated the divide for our resident.
- APAH was selected for the Digital Divide Project at Arlington Mill. Thanking Jack Belcher and his staff for their support.
- https://gmu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cnWkGS36XSXVxl-A6xsFLg This is the GMU Arlington Forward session on Nov. 17th at noon: The Technology Divide: How COVID 19 Exposed Disparity in Communities and What we can Do about It".

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Nathaniel Root

- Arlington Mill is a 122 unit 100% affordable rental property
- Serving residents with incomes below 60% of the areas medium incomes.
- In 2016 **APAH** was approach by the County about piloting free internet access program for low income residents
- Arlington Mill was selected because it shares a garage with the Arlington Community Center and were already on the County's Connect Arlington fiber ring, which is a reduced cost for infrastructure
- The Summer of 2018 the building was retro-fitted for a Mesh Wireless network
- Hardwire exit points were installed at strategic locations and configured to relay bandwidth wirelessly.
- Fall of 2018 the network went live
- In order for residents to receive access and a laptop, they were required to pass a digital literacy test or participate in a digital literacy digital program.
 - This could delay rollout and some residents may work two or more jobs
 - Scheduling and setting up new residents also presents its challenges
- Recommendations to use the hardwire connections from the telecom closet which will allow for full remote support from IT.
- Use of managed ISP which provides full customer support and distributes their own access points.
- There are currently 77 households participating in the pilot.

Digital Equity Update – Holly Hartell, County Staff

- **Overview of Needs Analysis**
 - What are households currently paying for internet?
 - What types of devices do households currently have in their home?
 - How reliable is the internet service?
 - Has COVID impacted household priorities when it comes to internet service?
- **Community Engagement**

- Survey from June 18-19, 2020, 200 telephone interviews
- Oversamples of interviews in zip codes 22204, 22204 and 22206
- Interviews in English and Spanish
- Focus Groups June 8-12, 2020, 28 County residents interviewed; 8 online focus groups and 3 one-on-one interviews
- Panelists were minority community households; lower or fixed income households and individuals with disabilities
- Almost half of the County households pay \$100 or more monthly for internet and 39% pay \$30-\$99 monthly.
- Children and older adults reported unreliable connectivity
- Houses with school age children experience connectivity issues 50% of the time,
- Connectivity issues in older apartment buildings
- Inability for school-age children to fully participate in class due to spotty or worse connectivity
- The issues with connectivity were made worse with COVID-19
- The Impact of COVID-19 since stay at home orders, what is more important to you regarding your home internet service
 - 43% Better pricing
 - 32% Better quality broadband
 - 11% Better Access
 - 4% More training
 - 11% did not answer
- Focus Group Respondent Recommendations
 - Encourage competition from multiple providers to give residents choices
 - Publicize Internet essentials more widely in low income and minority communities
 - Offer free or reduced cost Wi-Fi for most basic plans
 - Improve broadband quality and dependable connectivity in older buildings
- Expand outreach efforts to communities that speak languages other than English to address and improve issues of digital relevance, education and training.
 - Publish Digital Equity website
 - Engaged innovation Team on Digital Equity Resource map
 - Continue to engage the Digital Inclusion network
- **Progress Updates Since COVID**
 - Free Clinic Connection to VHC
 - Survey and focus groups
 - APS Comcast Internet Essentials
 - Wi-Fi Hotspots
 - Pop up Wi-Fi Hotspots
 - Legislative engagement
 - Execute feasibility study with Nonprofit entity

- WiFi Blaster pilot with Governor's Fasttrack Broadband CARES funding
- Complete and Implement Digital Equity Action Plan (DEAP)

David Herlihy, County Staff Liaison

- No problems with accessing board meetings or other meetings in the time of COVID, mostly the user's end when there are problems.
- There was instability on website. The voting site was pulled down and moved to another platform, which is not fully operational

Review 28 September 2020 Meeting Minutes

- Minutes adopted
- Motion to move the November meeting to shift one week and meet on 18 NOV 20

Principles for Digital Contact Tracing Technologies (Draft Letter reviewed at September Meeting) –

John Burke

- Copies of letter were sent to commission members for review
- One technical edit made
- Motion to adopt friendly amendment offered by Mike Carleton was approved 7-0 with two abstentions
- Motion to send to Board for review was approved 9-0

Legislative Update – Frank Jazzo

- Virginia Supreme Court ruled that Virginia law enforcement agencies can indefinitely store license plate information gathered via scanner.
- Eliminate the Digital Divide act was introduced recently. Will provide 10 Billion dollars for state to provide Broadband programs and expand reach for Telehealth platform for underserved communities.
- FCC by a 3-2 vote upheld its 2017 Order rescinding the Net Neutrality rules adopted by the prior FCC, in response to remand from the DC Circuit Court of Appeals.
- By 3-2 vote the FCC streamlined its rules for compound expansion at existing tower sites, to speed wireless broadband infrastructure deployment. State and local governments may not deny certain requests to modify existing wireless structures that do not substantially change physical dimensions, which promotes collocation for 5G.

Adjournment

7:37 PM

Next Meeting

Next Virtual Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 6pm via Teams