



Special Communications Committee – Board of Representatives

Bob Lion, Chair Nina Sherwood, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, January 17, 2019
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Democratic Caucus Room, 4th Floor Government Center, 888
Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Special Communications Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lion and Committee Member Reps. Sherwood, Matherne, Michelson, Moore, Nabel and Zelinsky. Absent or excused was Rep. Morson.

Chair Lion called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. C30.013	REVIEW; Develop a strategy to implement City-wide constituent email collection. 12/05/18 – Submitted by Communications Committee	Report Made

Chair Lion informed the Committee that the City spent approximately \$115 - 120,000 on public notices in the last fiscal year. This may include RFP notices.

Committee members discussed:

- Having a way to collect email addresses in the City which would be available to all elected officials, including a name, street address
- There should be an opt-in whenever a person logs into a City website (an opt-in is more consistent with the current European restrictions (GDPR), which is also becoming the practice in the US)
- They should also request phone numbers
- Should representatives have access to the emails or to the list?
 - There may be privacy concerns raised by having a list
 - Elected officials only hold temporary positions and should not have lists or individuals' private information
 - Representatives should be able to contact residents on a street or in an area; technology would have to be created to do this
- The City website currently has the ability to request contact from various City departments, but not the elected Boards
- The collection of this information should be part of on any contact the City has with the public
- The question is how to capture resident information for appropriate use with rules

- and regulations, including name, address, telephone number, email address, age
- It should be sortable by above/below 18; district
 - Should nonresidents be included
 - Will residents be inundated with emails
 - The focus of the email collection should be for the use of elected officials, which other departments could then access
 - There should be rules and regulations about
 - Prohibiting campaigning
 - Limiting the number of emails a representative can send
 - Would the email need to be vetted before it is sent out
 - Who would be responsible for checking
 - Should emails using this list be neutral – used solely for news, public hearings and city service updates - or provide representatives' positions on issues
 - Is it appropriate for the City to enable partisan communications – this may be a question for Corporation Counsel
 - Should people be directed to members' Facebook pages, etc. for their opinions?
 - Should it be limited to board activity

The committee voted on whether the email list should be allowed to use for more than just information. This failed by a vote of 3-3-1. (Reps. Matherne, Sherwood and Zelinsky in favor; Reps. Lion, Michelson and Moore opposed; Rep. Nabel abstaining).

The Committee will seek feedback from Corporation Counsel on these ideas.

Chair Lion adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lion, Chair

This meeting is on video ([Pt 1](#) & [Pt 2](#))