

Summary of Discussion (Delmarva Digital Redesign)

This transcript captures an initial planning conversation between the town of Laurel Communications Committee and Delmarva Digital about modernizing our town website. The discussion focused on the vendor's experience and security credentials, a custom content management approach, governance and liability considerations for who can publish content, and early ideas for improving navigation, information access, calendars, and public engagement.

- **Vendor experience & trust:** Nearly 30 years delivering sites for small businesses through large e-commerce and government entities; awarded sensitive-data work in Delaware (e.g., ethics/accountability-related sites) due to security qualifications; experience with municipalities, police departments, legislature, and nonprofits.
- **Custom CMS vs. templates:** Vendor uses a custom-built content management system (not WordPress/Joomla/Drupal) intended to reduce common security and maintenance risks and to make routine updates simple and fast (WYSIWYG editing; updates published quickly).
- **Local partnership model:** Emphasis on being nearby, accessible, and collaborative (ability to meet in person); vendor leadership plans to stay personally involved in municipal/police projects.
- **Website goals:** Improve navigation and findability; add more public-facing information beyond bill pay; keep the design simple, intuitive, and not visually overwhelming.
- **Content strategy:** Much of the site may consist of links to resources, department reports, calendars, and monthly council/department updates; desire to distribute update responsibilities to departments rather than centralizing with the town manager.
- **Security & liability:** Strong caution against broad publishing access (password hygiene is a major vulnerability). Recommendation is to limit admin accounts to trusted town administration staff and use best practices to reduce risk of inappropriate/illegal content being posted.
- **Permissions & auditability:** Vendor can implement role-based permissions and activity logging; options discussed include submission queues requiring admin approval before content goes live.

- **Community submissions:** Interest in allowing community organizations to submit calendar items that route into an approval queue (with optional verification) before publishing.
- **Analytics:** Use of Google Analytics to understand site usage trends (view counts, growth over time) for internal measurement rather than displaying counters publicly.

Decisions & Next Steps

1. **Provide structure details for estimating:** Town team to outline anticipated pages/menus and what each will contain (even if primarily links) so the vendor can refine scope.
2. **Define content owners:** Decide which departments will post monthly reports/updates and whether updates are done directly by departments or routed through an administrator.
3. **Confirm security model:** Agree on number of administrator accounts (recommendation: keep minimal—often two for redundancy) and define role-based permissions.
4. **Decide on submission workflow:** Determine whether community calendar submissions will require verification and what information (name/contact) is required for approval.
5. **Align on homepage approach:** Draft a simple homepage layout that highlights bill pay plus news/events, rotating visuals, and a calendar to “retrain” residents to use the site for information.
6. **Ballpark cost & timing:** Vendor to prepare a preliminary cost range ahead of the next council discussion/meeting date and identify key scope drivers that could change price.
7. **References:** Review comparable sites mentioned (e.g., Georgetown municipal site; Milford Police site) as style/functionality references.

George Lodato
Committee Chairman

Jill Cranmer
Recording Secretary