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**A QUICK REPORT**

Date: February 28, 2003  
To: Mayor and Council  
From: Emily M. Dickens, Mayoral Aide  
Subject: Committee on Council Communications Meeting  
February 26, 2003

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The following provides a brief summary of the February 26, 2003 Committee on Council Communications meeting.

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Kevin Foy, Councilwoman Dorothy Verkerk, Councilwoman Edith Wiggins

Staff Present: Mayoral Aide Emily Dickens and Mayoral Intern Carlo Robustelli

Also Present: Susan Moran (Public Information Officer Town of Cary)

The first hour of the meeting was spent identifying the goals of the Committee. Those identified are:

1. To provide informative channels of communication between the Council and constituents.
  - a. Some suggestions were:
    - i. Website development
    - ii. Listserve
    - iii. Newsletters
    - iv. Brochures
2. To encourage citizens who normally do not have an interest in participating in government to do so.
  - a. Some suggestions were:
    - i. Public service announcements
    - ii. Information sessions
3. To help constituents understand the various processes necessary to meet their Town Hall needs.

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- a. Including:
  - i. Petition process
  - ii. Board application process
  - iii. LUMO
  - iv. Rental Licensing Program

The Committee determined that to begin working on these goals, money should be set aside in the Council's budget specifically for Council Communications. The suggested amount was \$20,000.

During the second hour, Susan Moran, Public Information Officer for the Town of Cary, made a presentation to the Committee. Ms. Moran touched on the following issues in her presentation:

1. Why the Town of Cary decided to hire a Public Information Officer.
2. The importance of strategic, comprehensive communication with the public.
3. The importance of a positive relationship with the media.
4. The importance of media relations training for the entire town staff and Council.
5. A warning that the selection of a particular communication channel should be based on research including phone surveys and web polls.
6. The usefulness of citizen satisfaction surveys and the Town of Cary's mode of use.
7. Suggestions for getting the most out of the Town's cable channel.
8. How to lay the groundwork for developing a Public Information Officer position.

The Committee agreed to take the following actions before scheduling their next meeting:

1. Make a request to the entire council regarding funding for Council Communications.
2. Request a report from the Mayor's office on developing both a short-term and long-term communications plan.