

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 everybody was 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 public's 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 though 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

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're trying 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?

HILLARY DAVIS

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 have

several 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 when there 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.

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.

Katiuska Perez

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.

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 that we 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

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.

Deborah Zaki

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 bringing 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 their

reason 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](http://openprovidenceri.com), 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.

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. Greg Gerritt.

Greg Gerritt

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.

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 to

me 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.

COMMISSIONER SILVERIA

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.

Jessan Dunn Otis

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 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.

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 –. I

would 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.

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 question

on 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 you

may 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.

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