

DRAFT Facilities Oversight Committee
Notes on the meeting of 17 Mar 2006

1. The meeting was called to order at 11 am in the President's Conference Room. Those present were Murray J. Leaf (Chair), Tres Thompson, Kent Mecklenburg, Hobson Wildenthal, Peggy Zotter, Kevin Patel, William Hargrove, Cassini Nazir, and Haywood McNeill. Mr. Cassini and Mr. McNeill are doing the design and programming for the website.

2. Problems website. Mr. Cassini distributed a handout giving the general structure of the website and made a brief presentation on progress so far. The plan is to have a single homepage that would be reached from the main UTD website, and that would have links to seven subordinate pages: Building Requisitions and Liaison Committee, Campus and Office Safety Committees, Computer Security and Infrastructure, Waterview Apartments, Athletic Facilities, Parking, and Long-term Planning. We will also agree to have a page for the Facilities Committee itself. We did not discuss this latter page thoroughly enough to reach a consensus, but there seemed to be general agreement that it should contain minutes and annual reports as a minimum.

The url will be <http://www.utdallas.edu/facilities>.

The name of the website on the UTD website will be "FACILITIES HOTLINE." The home page for our site would repeat this heading, then have an introductory sentence with the statement that this was for problems and suggestions relating to physical facilities, and then the present explanation of what this means.

Content will follow the pattern in the present mockup, with the same headings and with each heading followed immediately with a short description of the kind of problems that should be referred to the contacts listed.

This was approved, and discussion turned to question of how the links should be named and arranged for the page that contains the links to Physical Plant, which currently contains the building/unit liaisons. The problem is that at present some of them are described as associated with buildings or parts of buildings, and some with administrative units. This is not logically consistent basis, and will not be transparent to many on the faculty or to most students.

It was agreed that the website would include a campus map that users could use to identify and click on to locate the problem they were reporting, but this still would not solve the problem of saying who their communication should go to.

Two major strategies emerged in the discussion. The first was to have possible offices or functions in physical plant designated in advance on the form that would pop up, and send it directly to whichever was checked off, either bypassing the liaisons entirely or copying them (and the facilities committee). The other was to agree on a single scheme to group the liaisons by that would make the areas of responsibility consistent and clear on the webpage. A subordinate possibility in this strategy is that if the user went to the campus map to find where the problem was and clicked on its location, what would pop up would be one of the areas of responsibility that were listed on the liaison page, or the liaison page with the appropriate person/area highlighted. A further possibility in this same strategy was to group the liaisons by mail station, since staff and faculty generally know their mail stations and students know their classrooms, which have similarly coded designations.

It was agreed that Peggy Zotter and Murray Leaf would discuss these possibilities with Larry Terry and, possibly, physical plant to see which was more workable from their perspective and report to Mr. Cassini by the end of the next week.

3. Use of the Master Plan as a common basis for discussing current and long-term planning.

With respect the options developed at the previous meeting, the idea of a 3-D flyover akin to Google Earth, associated with a forum to host some type of communal discussion, was considered too costly and difficult to justify the possible benefits, and was set aside.

With respect to the idea of using a set of maps from the planning process as overlays, to allow users to see the constraints that presently exist and explore possibilities, Peggy Zotter reported that the VPBA had no files with maps and other details from the plan except the large CD (152 pages) that has been summarized on the campus website. Mr. Cassini and Mr. McNeil considered that the maps would be hard to use to make displays from that could be used as overlays. Dr. Wildenthal questioned the need for the maps, and suggested instead that the best basis for discussions of the campus in the future would be the campus in the present. We have a relatively low resolution areal photograph of the campus already; for a very nominal fee we could get a photograph made allowing resolution down to about six inches. We could then put this on the web allowing users to zoom in, and we could readily allow access to the low-resolution master-plan maps to let people see what the possibilities might be. We could, then not only wait for people to have ideas and offer them. We could also pose questions on possibilities and collect well informed responses. The consensus of the committee was that this was what we should try to do.

4. New Business. Following up the idea of proposing specific questions, Dr. Wildenthal posed one to the committee: should we have a traffic light at the intersection of Avenue A and Rutford (and the parking lot for the Activities Center). It was agreed that this was a major danger spot and something had to be done to improve it. Kevin Patel offered a motion to install a traffic light. In view of the time (about four minutes to 12:00), the chair ruled that there was not enough time for a careful discussion and tabled consideration to the next meeting.

5. It was agreed that the next meeting would be 28 April 2006.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Murray J. Leaf,
Chair.