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Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, May 6, 2020

- IV. **Technical problem at last meeting.** Explanation for technical difficulties during the April 29 Planning Board meeting and discussion of ways to enhance reliability with the technology.

Here are emails sent to me from Luke Vincent, Durham's Manager of Information Technology. He and Craig Stevens, DCAT Coordinator, work together on these issues.

From: Luke Vincent
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 3:51 PM
To: Michael Behrendt
Cc: Craig Stevens; Todd Selig
Subject: Re: Troubles last night

Michael,

We are building the infrastructure to support the hybrid approach. The Zoom Room now provides 1 screen for the audience and 2 screens for those around the table to view both Zoom participants and shared screen content. This was done in response to our own observations and feedback we received about how presentations were being given through Zoom. I think the issue we had last night, while show stopping, will be fixed quickly. It would be nice to test at scale before the next critical meeting, but that often isn't a luxury we have so we do the best we can.

I believe DCAT can handle it either way. In fact, if we had been all virtual last night, the meeting would have gone on unfettered. However, there is definitely something to be said for having at least a few people in the chambers and we are working to accommodate that.

While I can't say for sure everything is a go for next week at this point, my experience tells me we'll be able find a way to make either scenario work.

Thanks,

Luke

PS- Craig and I have not discussed HDC at this point, he may want to add more to this.

(over)

From: Luke Vincent
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 1:27 PM
To: Michael Behrendt
Cc: Craig Stevens; Todd Selig
Subject: Troubles last night

Michael and Craig,

Do we all now have a handle on what went down last night? Craig, I know Access AV will be in tomorrow thanks for getting them involved immediately.

I want to make this clear. This was not a problem with Zoom. Zoom was working correctly. In addition, the 2 extra viewing screens (installed this week) were correctly displaying the Zoom Room.

The problem seems to be (and I'm leaving it to AccessAV to confirm) that the SDI to USB converter has either failed, or is not getting the correct outbound signal (what I'm leaning toward) from the TV station to the PC. This "little" (\$400 MSRP) box provides audio (microphone) and video input into the Zoom Room PC.

The PC is configured correctly, and we know from the PC's USB port to SDI converter is probably not the issue as we can see a test pattern when the SDI source is removed. That's why I'm leaning towards a problem with the SDI signal headed into the unit.

Again, we should have an answer in the morning as to what is wrong but I want to nip any anti-Zoom sentiment in the bud.

Some ways we might be able to avoid a situation like this in the future:

- *Purchase a second SDI to USB converter and have it hooked to a different SDI port waiting as a backup to the active one**
- *Split the first input of switcher (blackmagic videohub) and leave a cable spooled up in the TV rack as a spare, eliminating the SDI convert as a hot bypass**
- *Put in a dedicated camera/mic for zoom that is separate from the TV station**

All of these option involve adding some form of redundancy. That will be the key moving forward, eliminating single points of failure.

Thank you,

Luke