

6/11/15 Geospatial Advisory Council Draft Minutes

State Office Campus, Building 7a, 1st floor training room

Members Attending in Person

Bill Johnson
Eric Herman
Jeff Herter
Frank Winters
David Jorgensen
Matthew Knutzen
Alex Chaucer
Austin Fisher
Doug Freehafer
Todd Nelson
Sheri Norton
Matthew Owen
Colin Reilly
Michael Ross
Ann Deakin
Jeff Quackenbush

Members via Telephone

Julie Tolar

Members Absent

Laura Feitner Calarco
Glen Cutter
Jim Daly
Craig Cheeseman

Others Present

Lis DeGironimo
Bob Gehrler
Kate Kiyanita
Paul Fasano
Cheryl Benjamin
Jeff Langella

Logistics/Review/Approval of Minutes

Eric mentioned an addition to the agenda now that DOS Geographic Gateway is up, Jeff Herter will give a demo later in day. Minor typos were pointed out in the minutes, and they were approved as amended.

Chair Report

Clearinghouse Updates:

Eric mentioned that the photo of the Council members is now posted, and that minutes from last meeting have been posted as a draft. Bill mentioned that the "Welcome from GIO" page is still being developed, and hopes to have that available soon. Eric pointed out that although the member terms are now posted, past members are not. The rest of the group agreed, and Eric took an action item to assemble this for posting.

Council Logistics:

The Council discussed the merits and drawbacks of holding the meetings at other locations. Specifically, Oriskany and Saratoga Springs were mentioned. There was general agreement that moving the meeting occasionally could be beneficial, but that it should not be more than about an hour away from the Capital District. Alex will see if a Saratoga location is available for the September meeting.

Make up of Council: Jeff Herter had suggested earlier that we should re-examine the makeup of the Council every few years. As things change, we should re-evaluate. An ad-hoc work group was established to look into the current membership representation. Jeff will head the group. Ann reminded the group that the last nominating committee had some thoughts about this, including adding a surveyor to the group. Eric pointed out that the ex-officio positions also lend a strong state bias with only 2 rotating positions.

Eric mentioned that he had asked Julie to start the process for the Association to provide recommendations to the Council, for terms that start next year. He pointed out that there are 7 terms expiring, and all are eligible for second term except Craig Cheeseman, who has served two already. A discussion ensued that incumbents should be considered first, and asked if they are interested in serving an additional term, if the nominating committee wishes to re-nominate them. Bill suggested that the Association not be tasked until September, when the Nominating Committee is established. Julie agreed. The group was reminded that the Association can nominate up to 3 people for each position, and provides a greater pool of candidates. Julie mentioned that it is difficult for the Association to reach out, and ask for resumes, when their recommendations may not be chosen. She asked if the Association could just come up with names and the nominating committee would do the outreach for resumes. Based on the discussions, Eric mentioned that the [Governance Document](#) would need to be altered to change June to September and ask the nominating committee to request names from the Association after determining which positions actually needed to be filled. Austin offered to make the appropriate changes to the document, and send them to the group for approval.

Open Data:

Eric noted that the former Open Data Director for the state, Andrew Nicklin has accepted a new position in Maryland, and his old position is currently vacant. Consequently, the earlier discussions about putting a GIS tag on spatial datasets are on hold. However, there is a currently an icon on the Open Data site that indicates a spatial data set (though it is not searchable).

Executive Director Report

GIS Core Services:

Bill then discussed the fact that there is now approval to operationalize the GIS plan, and begin assembling a Core Services Team. Staffing is expected to start in 2-3 months. The STORM (State

Operations Resource Management System) initiative is an initial project that this team can assist with. The Core Services Team will be located in the ITS Public Safety Cluster. Although still in the Cluster, this group will continue to serve a much broader function. The role of the GIO will still be to coordinate across clusters. The part of the organization that Frank Winters was managing will now be headed by Marty Goldblatt. Marty and a new Core Services leader will report to Frank, who will head this larger organization, which will probably retain the GIS Program Office (GPO) name. The GPO is likely to move to a new physical location.

Austin asked who the consumers of the existing GIS services are, and whether we can identify their needs. He also asked if we can dictate that “going it alone” is no longer permitted. Bill replied that all GIS-related ITS purchases that are GIS still go through him, and that conflicts with direction must be revised. He also mentioned that there are Cluster representatives who meet weekly addressing these potential conflicts, and that there is an eNY group to address public-facing needs. Austin reiterated that we also serve as one of those channels for this activity. Jeff asked about the timeline, and Bill notes that STORM is the current business driver, including framework data layers, and work is pushing ahead. Jeff also suggested planning for 2 years, and considering cloud services. Bill replied that they are open to using outside commercial services, if security concerns addressed. In response to Colin’s questions, Bill noted that this would be built internally, and that he would forward information, once it’s further spec’d out. He highlighted that this is a huge step forward, and that progress should improve significantly now.

Progress on Geocoding Coordination:

Geocoding will be the first major web services provided in a new core platform. With the current infrastructure, the systems are not yet ready to handle the anticipated load. 35 different geocoders are currently being used statewide. The GIS Team is looking at is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), for a possible partnership on this, and has been working with Mike Byrne, in CFPB’s Technology and Innovation Division. Mike is known for Open Source Mapping projects. Bill noted that banks have to report what Census tract that every mortgage is in, and CFPB is looking to narrow this to a street address, and is building a national geocoder for this purpose.

GIS Program Office Director Report

Orthoimagery/Elevation Updates:

Jeff Langella gave a presentation providing updates on the GPO’s elevation collection and distribution efforts. He showed the latest elevation data maps. Doug Freehafer mentioned the availability of various sections of this data, and distributed further information. NOAA has a collection along the Atlantic Coast of Long Island’s barrier islands. Jeff mentioned that there is a lot of Quality Level 2 data. Eric reiterated the importance that this data should be made available as a web services as soon as possible. Jeff then gave an update of the orthoimagery production, with current and planned maps.

SAM Milestones:

Cheryl Benjamin talked about the Street Address Mapping (SAM) Program, which now has permanent funding, and the “Build” stage is now complete. The data are available on the Clearinghouse in geodatabase format. She then discussed the Production Status: Data has been delivered to most counties. There are 9 left to visit. The next phase is data maintenance. The GeoLynx online editing tool went live in March, with 6 counties trained and making edits. Cheryl’s been busy working on addressing standards groups.

Status of Parcel Plan:

Kate Kiyanitsa and Bob Gehrler discussed the Parcel Program. They’ve created a mission statement, and now have fulltime staff working on this project. Kate showed a status map: 33 counties are permitting sharing with State Agencies. Recorded ownership of state and federally owned land is included. The data will be standardized, and a layer of state owned lands has been assembled, and should be able to be shared externally. Bob stated that this is the best version yet of this type of data. The end goal is to make the data available to all levels of government, once agreements have been reached. Austin noted that this is still a limited audience, especially with all the discussion of “open data”. Bill noted that incremental progress is being made in changing the policies of the counties and municipalities. Bob noted that parcel polygons and attributes are two different data sets with two different owners. Jeff Herter asked for the maps to be distributed, and offered to assist with Jefferson and Orleans Counties. Bill said that personal relationships like this work the best. Colin noted that sharing requirements should be tied to financial distributions to the counties.

NYS GIS Association Report

Julie provided an update from the GIS Association. There are currently 640 members, which is the highest number yet. July 1 – June 30 fiscal year memberships are now being renewed. The NY Geo is coming up in the fall, and the Association is looking for a President Elect for next year. The Association received a \$10,000 grant, funded by the City of New York and secured by Alan Leidner, to determine GIS needs for local governments. They plan to do an RFP survey to determine statewide usage. There was some discussion about the grant, and how it could be most effectively used, including whether there was need for an RFP, or energies should be directed into providing more immediate solutions to those in need. Perhaps this could be done with training, or a survey to determine tasks that might benefit from GIS, and whet appetites.

State Agency Advisory Group Report

Eric reviewed the most recent State Agency meeting. There’s a trend towards more emphasis on providing external GIS applications and data. The group also discussed the new ITS title exams and how selective certification will be used for filling ITS positions. They discussed work on the state’s STORM

initiative, orthoimagery, LiDAR, and the upcoming October NYGeoCon. He mentioned that GIS Services available from State Agencies are posted to the Clearinghouse. The meeting finished with a demo of the State Historic Preservation Office's Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) public web application. The next meeting is scheduled for September 15.

Marketing Strategies/Branding

Lis DeGironimo talked about trying to help with Council "branding", rather than "marketing", and trying to highlight the advocacy role the Council plays. The group suggested moving the Council photo higher on the website, and adding the Welcome the GIO, as well as getting more traffic to the website. Lis also presented some logo ideas to help brand the ID of the group, by placing the standard logo on various Council items (including summaries of meeting highlights, which should be sent out). Social media options were also discussed. The group talked about overall website reconfiguration, to highlight the key offering of advocacy, and the services we offer of coordination and reducing wasteful duplication. Dave suggested that there should be a fuller history of accomplishments listed on the Internet, and Jeff suggested adding stories of advocacy and coordination. The group also talked about if we even needed to be linked to the state's "ny.gov" URL, and mining the analytics of the website to see what people want. Outreach efforts were also discussed, including to non-GISers, Esri forums, trade journals, Government Technology, and alumni journals. Alex proposed a small working group to move forward on a redesign of the website, and Eric tasked the existing Market Group (Lis, Jeff, Frank, Bill, Alex and David), with looking into this. The Branding Committee will assess the ideas, and provide further direction/recommendations.

NYS DOS Geographic Information Gateway

Jeff provided an overview and demonstration of the new Geographic Information Gateway from the Department of State. The site has a wealth of geographic data made available in a simple, accessible platform. It provides custom tools for stories, graphics, maps, and an interface to an enormous amount of data (starting with a focus on oceans, and soon to expand to the Great Lakes). There are hundreds of layers at this point, from DOS and other state agencies. Data can be easily viewed and downloaded, and are available as web services.

Council Priorities

Data Sharing Cooperative

Bill provided updates on his discussions with ITS attorneys, regarding complications with undoing Cooperative membership contracts. There are several complicating factors, and they still need more discussion. The primary focus should be on determining the current purpose of

the Cooperative. Bill and Frank mentioned that there are two primary datasets that draw people to the Cooperative:

- The streets file, which is mainly used by school districts for bus routes. The fully-attributed streets file still has portions that are owned by NAVTEQ. The company, now owned by Nokia, is in the process of being sold, and negotiations are not currently possible. An alternative needs to be available for street data, so that this can be resolved. Matt suggested a routing service for school districts, and the group discussed when products cease to be derivative, and are considered unique. Records of changes are being scrupulously maintained.
- County parcel data. This is being handled, per earlier discussions. There was an ensuing discussion of parcels and counties that charge for data and how much, based on a map that Sheri put together. Eric mentioned that parcel data is typically sold to the public, not to governments, so most people who have access to the parcel data via the Cooperative would have free access to it anyway.

There was a good deal of discussion about the “Beautiful Path Forward”, and new world of data sharing. Austin reiterated that we should be more vigorously advocating this. There was talk about how NYC handled the transition to Open Data went. Colin said that it was easier in the city’s situation, because they owned all of the data, and simply decided to put it out to the public. In our case, the many different levels of ownership complicate the situation.

Creation of NYS Geospatial Report Card

The group finished with a discussion of the [Geospatial Report Card](#) done by NSDI, and our need to do something similar in NY. Bill noted that a report card can help spur action, and Jeff noted that this is a specific product that the Council can provide. There were discussions about whether this should be a repeated periodic activity, instead of a one-time event, and that it could be used as the basis of a new strategic plan. Jeff suggested that we use the existing Strategic Plan as a starting point for topics to grade. The group planned to compile a list of headings and evaluation criteria ahead of the next meeting. This would then be used to discuss progress on these items, and set direction at the September planning meeting. Ann offered to start a shareable document, to collect this information, and allow others to list their input.

2015 Meeting Dates

The remaining 2015 meeting dates are September 16 and December 9.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was passed.